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MODERN STAGE PRESENTATION

by

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CHAPTER I

MODERNISM DEFINED

However skillful the producers of earlier days may have been, they could not achieve the artistry nor create the atmosphere of the play in the ways made possible by the contributions of modern science.

The newer principles of presentation have come by gradual change from the older. The processes by which these adaptations have been made I shall not at this point attempt to trace, but I shall indicate the time at which modernism started and state the fundamental ideas of the new era.

There is considerable latitude of opinion concerning the exact date of the beginning of the period.

Kenneth Macgowan, in The Theatre of Tomorrow, copyright, 1921, states: "The thing that has been called the new movement in the theatre is a quarter of a century old."[1] From 1808 to the time of Adolphe Appia's publication in 1893 there were some anticipations of the new art movement; however, he says that it was Appia's book, "Die Musik und die Inscenierung," published in 1899, which had a very great effect in Germany.[2] Gordon Craig, "whose genius has been

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[1] Kenneth Macgowan, The Theatre of Tomorrow (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1921), p. 13.

[2] Ibid., pp. 14-16.

the greatest force in the theatre since Ibsen,"[3] started the study of stage management in 1896 after he left the company of Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, but he published no connected account of his theories until 1905.[4] During the late nineties Max Reinhardt, "destined to become the most famous of modern regisseurs,"[5] was studying the new methods of staging; by 1905 he was exploiting them, as were other scenic directors.[6]

> In Russia when the Moscow Art Theatre was founded in 1898 by Stanislavsky and Nyemirovich-Dantchenko, the realistic movement fused to a certain extent with the impulse towards unity of production and completeness of emotional expression on the part of the actors, which is a necessary feature of the newest movement.[7]

An entirely different time and basis for modernism are given by Lee Simonson in The Stage is Set. From 1874 to 1890 the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen in Germany introduced important changes into the technique of production. He could not know that a Frenchman, Antoine, and a Russian, Stanislavsky, would be so impressed by his innovations that later they would incorporate many of his ideas into their

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[3] Ibid., p. 16.

[4] Ibid., pp. 16-17.

[5] Ibid., p. 17.

[6] Ibid., pp. 17-18.

[7] Ibid., p. 18.

presentations.[8] The Duke insisted that the stage setting must interpret the atmosphere of the script and also that its design must be determined by the actors' movements within it.[9] He tried "to add to the plastic possibilities of stage setting by breaking the monotonous surface of the stage floor into different levels."[10] The interpretative value of interstices of light and the contrast of light and shadow which were innovations then are now the commonplace of staging.[11]

Montrose J. Moses in Dramas of Modernism and Their Forerunners considers that the modern theatre has been passing through a revolution since the Great War--and even a few years before.[12] Since he includes in his books dramas written or produced in 1904, 1902, 1909, 1899,[13] he must feel that the changes in the modern drama had their inception many years before 1914.

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[8] Lee Simonson, The Stage is Set (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1932), pp. 282, 303-304.

[9] Ibid., p. 272.

[10] Ibid., p. 289.

[11] Ibid., pp. 288-289.

[12] Montrose J. Moses, Dramas of Modernism and Their Forerunners (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1936), p. xiii.

[13] Ibid., pp. 9, 45, 333, 377.

Although these authorities differ as to the exact date for the beginning of modernism, they all show that the newer ideas controlling stage presentation and therefore a change in the actual conditions of production began to have a widespread effect in Europe late in the 1890's and early in the 1900's; this is the period I shall consider as the basis for the present discussion.

There are several outstanding principles of modernism.

The setting had been considered desirable as a background only, until the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen stated that every part of the setting must be related to the movements of the actor upon the stage.[14] He realized what is now accepted as an essential of stage production, that since the background should help the actor convey his message to the audience, the setting could not be designed until the actions of the players had been determined.[15]

Closely related to this theory is the idea that the setting can and should contribute as fully as possible to the intellectual and emotional atmosphere of the play.[16]

The lighting, also, plays its important part in a successful production. The great advances which science has

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[14] Lee Simonson, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 286, 272.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 286.

made in the use of various colors and intensities of light have been utilized on the stage not only to interpret mood, emphasize the dramatic values of a performance, and heighten our emotional response to them[17] but also, sometimes, to create very striking effects and some never-to-be-forgotten scenes.

The greater the knowledge gained along these lines--setting as an aid to the actor and as a means of creating atmosphere, the still-unfathomed possibilities of lighting--the more complicated became the problem of preparing the play for the audience. "Appia . . . . first insisted on the dominant importance of the director as a dictator controlling every element of a theatrical production."[18] If one person selected a play, another designed the sets, a third worked out the light-plot, still another directed the actors, the result was not a unified performance: each leader conveyed his own ideas. The solution of the problem was to have one director for the play.[19] His function was and is to use setting, lights, actors, and play to portray the mood the audience should receive. The _regisseur_ or

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[17] Lee Simonson, "Appia's contribution to the modern stage." _Theatre Arts Monthly_, XVI (August, 1932), 632.

[18] _Ibid._, p. 643.

[19] _Ibid._, pp. 643-644.

director controlling every element of a theatrical production has become a dominant factor on the stage.[20]

Even the most careful planning of the details mentioned is not enough to cause the success of a play; there must be harmony established between the audience and the production so that the playgoer can "visualize the situation, justify the action, clarify the emotion, picture the type, and scientifically explain the pauses and silences,"[21] if he wishes, as he realizes the ways in which the conflicts of life are being intensified.[22]

Plays of every age have usually reflected some phase of the life of the period. "The new hero of contemporary drama is the intellect, and external struggle must take a secondary place."[23] Ibsen realized the importance of depicting social responsibility. Many times since his day dramatists have used social interpretation for their problems.[24] "We are living in a new world of human relationship where there is much confusion as to principle and pur-

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[20] Kenneth Macgowan, The Theatre of Tomorrow (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1921), p. 17.

[21] Montrose J. Moses, Dramas of Modernism and Their Forerunners (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1936), p. vii.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. viii.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. viii.

pose."[25] A person cannot understand the modern drama by studying the theatre of any one country. Each dramatist takes his own particular place in the world stream of throught.[26] The change in the physical side of stagecraft has been able to interpret

> a realm of restless imagination, of mental uneasiness, where nerves are overcharged and where dramatic technique is all the time feeling for new forms and new impressions.[27]

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[25] *Ibid.*, p. ix.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. ix.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. x.

CHAPTER II

THE MODERN STAGE

When the playgoer observes the remarkable effects achieved on the stage by lighting, scenery, costumes, and actors, he does not consider the ancestry of the modern stage, the characteristics which have survived from earlier theatres, or those which have been added by modernism. He may prefer to take his enjoyment unanalyzed, but a study of all of these attributes of the theatre is necessary for anyone who wishes to understand modern stage presentation.

Although drama has existed in many different countries, the influence of the Greek has been outstanding upon all succeeding epochs. "The most significant part of the Greek drama, as represented by surviving plays, falls . . . . between 500 B. C. and 385 B. C.,"[1] but its beginnings were much earlier "lying in the religious functions that went with the worship of the god Dionysus."[2] At the festivities

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[1] H. C. Schweikert, Early English Plays (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1928), p. 1.

[2] Ibid., p. 1.

> the cultivators and harvesters of the grape came together in a jolly assembly which occasionally gave extravagant expression to its joy; . . . . in the course of time these extempore songs and orgiastic dances passed under the control of a chorus leader, whose duty it was to see that the songs were properly sung by a trained choir . . . . . It is probable that it early occurred to these witty Greek revelers to mimic in caricature certain of the persons whom they felt the urge to ridicule; possibly a dialogue took place between the leader of the choir and the actor who represented the victim of the satire.[3]

Gradually this type of entertainment may have developed into regular comedy. In the course of time tragedy developed.[4]

As the dramatic presentation became more formal, and the subjects more varied, some definite place was needed for the greater comfort and convenience of the audience and the actors.[5] Theatres came into existence. Numerous extant Greek theatres were built on the slope of a hill; they were open to the sky; the performances took place in the daytime without artificial lighting.[6] The essential parts of a Greek theatre are the auditorium, the stage, and the orchestra in which the chorus danced and the acting took place. At first the orchestra was a complete circle; in the center

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[3] Joseph Richard Taylor, The Story of the Drama Beginnings to the Commonwealth (Boston: Expression Company, 1930), p. 68.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 68-73.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 154.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 148-151.

stood the sacred altar of the god. Later the form was reduced to something between a circle and a semicircle.[7]

Of the many respects in which the Roman theatre differed from the Greek, a few affected the presentation of plays. By the time of Plautus

> a wooden platform served as a stage. This platform-stage had a background which was called the _scaena_; the platform itself was named the _proscenium_ or _pulpitum_; the place where the spectators stood or sat was known as the _cavea_; the level space between the stage and the main body of the audience was known as the _orchestra_.[8]

There was no curtain in the Greek theatre; in some, at least, of the Roman structures there was such a device.[9]

Mediaeval drama developed from the dramatization of parts of the ritual of the Catholic church, especially parts of the Christmas and Easter services. When words were added to some of the early antiphonal chants, tropes were formed. From these came the spoken dialogue of the liturgical drama. The popularity of the tropes and the liturgical dramas led to further development and elaboration until there was the evolution of the Miracle plays, religious plays no longer a part of the church services, but an outgrowth from it, as well as those that presented other Bible stories and the

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[7] _Ibid._, pp. 153-154.

[8] _Ibid._, p. 208.

[9] _Ibid._, p. 250.

lives and legends of the saints.[10] These plays were taken "out of the church, first to the porch, then to the churchyard, and finally to the square before the church or some other convenient place."[11] There was an open place or platea and especially localized places called sedes. These may have been slightly raised platforms.[12] When the laymen took control of the plays, pageant-wagons were often used to take the plays from place to place.[13] Moralities, presenting allegories, developed.[14] They were performed throughout England in the open fields, in the town hall, in the manor house, or in the courtyard of an inn.[15]

The English innyard, which was later used also for secular plays, was usually a hollow square with galleries on three sides from which the wealthier spectators could look down upon the actors whose platform extended from the rear

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[10] H. C. Schweikert, Early English Plays (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1928), pp. 11-17.

[11] Brander Matthews and Paul Robert Lieder, editors, The Chief British Dramatists (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1924), p. xii.

[12] W. H. Loveland, Course in Early English Plays (Springfield, Massachusetts: Boston University School of Education, July-August 1934), Lecture.

[13] Brander Matthews and Paul Robert Lieder, editors, op. cit., pp. xii-xiii.

[14] H. C. Schweikert, op. cit., pp. 31-32.

[15] Brander Matthews and Paul Robert Lieder, editors, op. cit., pp. xiv-xv.

gallery. The city authorities finally compelled the actors to build theatres of their own outside the city limits.[16] "The first theatre may be described as the courtyard of an inn, without the inn."[17]

It was in 1576 that James Burbage built the first London playhouse, the Theatre, in Shoreditch. Several other public theatres, open to the air, outside the city limits had been built by 1607.[18]

> The size and arrangement of the stage doubtless varied somewhat with the different theaters, and considerable changes seem to have been introduced by the indoor private theatres. But . . . in all the stage was the same in its main features.[19]

It was a platform

> projecting into the pit, open on three sides, and without any front curtain. In the rear were two doors, and between them, an alcove, or inner stage, separated from the front stage by curtains. Above the inner stage was a gallery, also provided with curtains, and over the doors were windows or balconies. The arrangements of doors, inner stage, gallery, and curtain may have varied somewhat, but the essential elements are a curtained space at the rear, and a gallery above. Trapdoors were also provided, and the hut overhead supplied the machinery for ascents and descents of gods and goddesses.[20]

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[16] Ibid., p. xv.

[17] Ibid., p. xv.

[18] William Allan Neilson and Ashley Horace Thorndike, The Facts About Shakespeare (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931), p. 117.

[19] Ibid., p. 122.

[20] Ibid., p. 122.

"Light, when needed, was provided by torches."[21]

"With the Restoration there came a new type of playhouse, roofed, lighted by candles and lamps, with most of the spectators seated. It had a spacious stage . . . . ."[22] The scenery was still placed on an inner stage and shut off from the outer stage by a curtain.[23] There was a platform projecting into the pit, and it was on this apron that the acting took place because it was the only part of the stage which could be lighted so as to allow the faces to be seen. As in the Elizabethan theatre, the performers were surrounded on three sides by the audience. There came to be elaboration of spectacular effect and of scenic devices.[24] "The stage was equipped with grooves on each side to keep the wings erect and to allow the use of flats to be run on to represent a wood or a street or a room."[25] In the alter-

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[21] Ibid., p. 121.

[22] Brander Matthews and Paul Robert Lieder, editors, op. cit., p. xvi.

[23] William Allan Neilson and Ashley Horace Thorndike, op. cit., p. 129.

[24] Brander Matthews and Paul Robert Lieder, editors, op. cit., pp. xvi-xvii.

[25] Ibid., p. xvii.

nation from outer to inner stage which was very common, flat scenes were often used instead of a curtain.[26]

"This type of theatre was the home of the English drama for a century and a half."[27]

Toward the end of the first half of the nineteenth century various other changes appeared in the theatre; still others, by the end of the last half. The abolition of the monopoly of the two patent theatres--Drury Lane and Covent Garden--brought smaller theatres into existence, giving a greater sense of intimacy.[28]

> Gas had been introduced toward the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century; and electric light followed at the beginning of the last quarter. The Apron being no longer necessary, it was abolished, the curtain rising and falling in the proscenium arch . . . .[29]

The inner stage of the Elizabethans now became the picture-frame stage. The use of flat scenes instead of a curtain persisted for a long time in the production of melodrama or of Shakespeare's plays: a painted drop shut off a few feet of the stage while properties and scenery were being ar-

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[26] William Allan Neilson and Ashley Horace Thorndike, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-130.

[27] Brander Matthews and Paul Robert Lieder, editors, *op. cit.*, p. xvii.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

ranged in the rear.[30] The doors at either side of the inner stage of the Elizabethan theatre became the proscenium doors; these, in front of the curtain, long survived but they have now finally disappeared.[31] "The box-set--the room with walls and ceiling--was introduced about the middle of the nineteenth century."[32]

While some theatres of the present time continue to use the picture-frame stage or the box-set stage, proscenium arch, footlights, and curtain, in many cases modifications and permanent changes have been made: the relief stage was created; the proscenium has been abolished or modified; the footlights no longer are used; the curtain, except the safety curtain required by law, is occasionally replaced by lighting devices; intimacy has been established.

In 1907, in Munich Georg Fuchs created the idea of the "relief stage,"[33] "a method of emphasizing the actor by placing him close to the audience upon a shallow stage that

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[30] William Allan Neilson and Ashley Horace Thorndike, op. cit., pp. 129-130.

[31] Kenneth Macgowan, The Theatre of Tomorrow (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1921), pp. 142-143.

[32] Brander Matthews and Paul Robert Lieder, editors, op. cit., p. xvii.

[33] Kenneth Macgowan, op. cit., p. 135.

throws his body in relief against a flat and very simple setting."[34]

In Germany as long ago as 1840 there was a desire to present the plays of Shakespeare as they were written, without cuts, in the order of their scenes and without waits for the shifting of scenes. The stages which were designed for Shakespearean plays have an inner proscenium at each side at the base of which[35]

> there are portals or formal doors, perhaps with windows and balconies above. Between these portals lies a forestage, a portion of which would be hidden by the normal curtain of the theatre. Back of this forestage and the inner proscenium is a deeper stage which may be set in any fashion to indicate a room or an exterior. . . . . While the actors are playing some front scene, the rear stage is being reset behind a curtain dropped within the inner proscenium.[36]

The mechanism of the German Shakespearean stages has been adapted to other plays and other purposes. The portals and inner proscenium were introduced to America by Joseph Urban in 1912-1914 and have been used many times with adaptations.[37] Max Littman, a German architect has devised what he calls the variable proscenium.[38] There is

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[34] Ibid., pp. 135-136.

[35] Ibid., pp. 138-139.

[36] Ibid., p. 139.

[37] Ibid., p. 140.

[38] Ibid., pp. 141-144.

> a rather deep proscenium frame into which doors and windows may be let. For realistic plays or old-fashioned operas . . . . there is the ordinary gap of the orchestra pit between the audience and the footlights.[39]

For music-drama

> the walls of the proscenium frame come out, and the orchestra pit is sunken and half-arched over by a sounding board . . . . . For Shakespearean and imaginative plays the walls of the proscenium are used with doors let in; the stage is extended out over the orchestra pit, making a forestage; steps lead down to the auditorium floor, where two or three rows of seats have been removed to make more playing space for the actors; finally, doors in the normal walls of the auditorium next to the proscenium are used for added entrances.[40]

The efforts to modify the proscenium and abolish it as a frame for the stage picture have been accompanied by many experiments to establish intimacy by mingling audience and actors.[41]

> In his big spectacles, 'Oedipus Rex' and the 'Miracle,' . . . . Reinhardt seated his audience round three sides of a space in the center of the hall rather like the orchestra of a Greek theatre. He brought his mobs of actors into this space through runways under the audience, and thus made them appear suddenly at the spectators' very elbow.[42]

In the commercial theatre, in 1920-21, for a melodrama "Spanish Love" the footlights and orchestra pit were taken out, and a forestage was installed on a lower level than the

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[39] *Ibid.*, p. 144.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 144.

[41] *Ibid.*, pp. 144-145.

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 145.

main stage with steps leading down to it at each end. The first box on each side became an entrance to this forestage. The actors used the aisles as well as the boxes for entrances.[43] In "Processional," Sadie at one time sits down at the foot of steps, center, practically in the audience. The actors come through the aisles on various occasions: near the beginning and again at the end a newsboy sells papers, the Jazz Miners enter playing a jazz march, an old Civil War veteran hobbles from the back of the auditorium, soldiers come down through audience, a strange double procession of Klan members appears, and at the end there is a procession of all but two of the characters which marches down through the audience and disappears at the rear of the theatre.[44] "Beggar on Horseback" also uses the aisles: while Neil is asleep, the double wedding procession comes from the rear of the auditorium; later newsboys rush in crying "Extra! Extra! All about the murders!" and distribute papers to the astonished members of the audience.[45]

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[43] Ibid., pp. 145-146.

[44] E. Bradlee Watson and Benfield Pressey, editors, Contemporary Drama American Plays I (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), pp. 192, 187, 289, 189, 192, 266, 270, 289.

[45] Ibid., pp. 333, 366-367.

Intimacy may also be established by the design of a theatre. Norman Bel Geddes has conceived many theatres radically different from most of the commercial theatres.[46] One principle which he has developed is that the auditorium and stage should not seem like two separate rooms but should be a unit. Another is that the auditorium and the stage should be centered on a diagonal axis.[47]

The Repertory Theatre Group, designed for the Chicago World Fair, expresses many of his ideas.[48]

The auditorium has no aisles. There is neither arch nor curtain for the stage. A low line of steps along the entire width of the curved front of the stage is the only means of separating the stage and the actors. The orchestra pit, between the audience and the actors is not visible to the spectators, but is so arranged that the conductor can see the auditorium and the stage. The rows of seats which follow the curve of the stage front are in quarter circles and are separated by aisle-wide spaces.[49] There is no proscenium arch.

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[46] Norman Bel Geddes, Horizons (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1932), pp. 161-181.

[47] *Ibid.*, pp. 143-144, 146.

[48] *Ibid.*, pp. 142-152.

[49] *Ibid.*, pp. 146-149.

> Except for the low flight of steps at the front of the stage and the two softly curving side jams which lose themselves in the curve of the ceiling, the stage is undivided from the auditorium. Thus, a sense of unity, intimacy, and audience-participation pervades the theatre, arising in part from the fact that the same great dome spans actors and audience.
>
> There are no balconies or galleries.
>
> The scenery is set on two movable platforms in the basement. These platforms are raised and lowered by hydraulic power to and from the level of the auditorium. The platform becomes the stage floor. One stage platform is being set while the other is being played; the substitution, which takes only thirty seconds, is made behind a curtain of light or a moment's darkness.
>
> No curtain is required in this theatre. To comply with the laws of most States, a steel curtain is provided for purposes of emergency to separate the basement, where the scenery is, from the auditorium. It is on the ceiling of the basement and slides horizontally across the opening.[50]

A further discussion of footlights will come in connection with lighting.[51]

The parts of the modern stage which I have discussed are those found in the indoor theatres of varying sizes and types.

The outdoor theatres, whose first ancestors existed more than two thousand years ago,[52] usually have single stages.

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[50] Ibid., pp. 149-150.

[51] Cf. post, p. 45, footnote 32; p. 47, footnotes 40, 41, 42; pp. 53-54, footnotes 58, 59, 60, 61.

[52] Seldon Cheney, The Open-Air Theatre (New York: Mitchell Kennerly, 1918), p. 2.

In order to have a convenient basis for discussion, open-air theatres may be grouped, according to their structural characteristics, in three classes.

> . . . . First there are the purely architectural theatres, usually of the classic type, large stone or concrete structures, with massive stage backgrounds.[53]

There are a number of these theatres in the United States and a few in Europe.[54]

> Closely allied to this type is the other purely architectural sort, the mediaeval religious theatre, with its platform stage and background of built-up 'localities' . . . . .
>
> In the second place there is the so-called 'nature theatre' or 'forest theatre,' which is exactly the opposite of the architectural type. Usually its stage is merely an open place in the woods or on a mountain side, with an idyllic natural background, while the auditorium if often nothing more than an open hillside or sloping meadow . . . .[55]

There are several of these nature theatres in Europe and many in this country.[56]

> The third type of open-air playhouse is the garden theatre, a type that stands between the other two, utilizing the trees and shrubs of nature for background, but often adding incidental architectural features, such as pergolas, treillage-work, and stone walls and stairways. The theatres . . . . at Mannheim, Germany, and Mt. Kisco, New York, may be considered as typical modern adaptations.[57]

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[53] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 30-49.

[55] *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

[56] *Ibid.*, pp. 65-85.

[57] *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

"Of modern open-air theatres, all that are characterized by rising semi-circular tiers of seats, with raised stages and high rear stage walls"[58] are termed Greek. The most notable of this type is the Hearst Greek Theatre at the University of California, in Berkeley. The outline of the auditorium is only slightly more than a semicircle, and the orchestra circle is very small. The stage building is absolutely separate from the auditorium. At each end and at the back of the stage building there is a wall more than forty feet high, ornamented with a beautiful design of Doric columns and classic cornices. This contains five doorways for the actors' entrances and exits, three at the back and one at each side.[59] The problem of lighting the theatre at night has been partly met by a row of masked footlights in a shallow depression along the stage front which is sometimes supplemented by a string of lights, masked on the auditorium side, suspended above the stage, and by spotlights thrown from the center of the diazoma.[60] The stage has no curtain.[61]

At Cranbrook, the country estate of Mr. George A. Booth, near Detroit, Michigan, one of the most beauti-

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[58] Ibid., p. 30.

[59] Ibid., pp. 31, 32, 33.

[60] Ibid., p. 162.

[61] Ibid., p. 34.

> ful of modern Greek theatres has been built. . . . . The low auditorium is set well back from the stage, leaving an unusually large orchestra. The raised stage is flanked by two temple-like structures, which may be used for dressing-rooms or for the musicians. At the rear of the stage the wall joining the two buildings is pierced by three wide entrances.[62]

The openings may be curtained. If no curtains are used,

> the audience then looks through the openings, across a long formal pool, to a second stage building at the rear. On this larger stage the director can produce the more extensive, pageant-like scenes, which depend for their effectiveness upon moving masses of actors, changing colors, and distant processionals.[63]

The theatre at Garfield Park, Chicago, planned specifically for pageant-like productions, has no rear stage wall, but the stage is framed by high pillars, two on each side.

In Europe, the Arena Goldoni at Florence is like half an arena with a raised stage opposite the seats. The stage which is open at the front is roofed. It was at this theatre that Gordon Craig and his associates established the School for the Art of the Theatre.

In the modern Greek theatre at Bradfield in England the auditorium forms more than a half-circle, the orchestra pit is a complete circle with an altar in the center, and

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[62] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

[63] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

the stage is a covered porch with five doorways for entrances and exits.[64]

The characteristics of the mediaeval religious theatre are shown at Ober-Ammergau.[65]

Whether the Ober-Ammergau Passion Play is a survival of the mediaeval religious drama or a separate growth, the stage is of the Miracle Play type, with the platform stage and several "localities."[66]

Annas' palace and a street in Jerusalem are on one side of the stage, and a street and Pilate's house are on the other, while the curtained proscenium arch behind which the tableaux are presented is in the center. Realistic hand-painted backdrops used in these tableaux form the modern note in the setting. The stage is raised a few feet above the ground. The auditorium is roofed, but the stage is uncovered. The play is presented during the daytime.[67]

"Of all the types of open-air theatre, the nature theatre is the one that has the maximum of openness and natural beauty."[68]

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[64] *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 43, 46.

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 60.

[66] *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

[67] *Ibid.*, pp. 60-62.

[68] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

Two of the European nature theatres which have especially interesting stages are the Harz Mountain Theatre at Thrale in the Harz Mountains, Germany and the open-air theatre at Herterstein, near Lucerne, Switzerland. At the Harz Theatre, the auditorium is on a mountain side. The stage is a large levelled space with jagged boulders at one end and a few small trees. All along the back is a rustic fence to prevent the actors from taking a too-realistic plunge over the precipitous cliff below. At the Herterstein Theatre there is a sloping bank between the stage and the auditorium. On the stage three buildings provide entrances and exits for those plays which would not fit into a natural setting; in the center is a temple or palace-front, in massive classic style; at the right is a three-storied tower; and at the left, a porch-like structure. Trees and shrubs add greatly to the attractiveness of the stage.[69]

> Perhaps the most remarkable of the American nature theatres, and the oldest, is that in a redwood grove near Monte Rio, California, owned by the Bohemian Club of San Francisco. . . . . The stage is a steep hillside, which is covered with a dense growth of underbrush, except where a trail winds up . . . . .[70]

At the bottom are a wide open space and several platforms which may be used by the actors. Two towering redwoods

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[69] *Ibid.*, pp. 65, 67-68.

[70] *Ibid.*, p. 71.

frame the stage. There are many other redwoods, two or three hundred feet high, on the hillside.[71]

Similar to the Bohemian Grove Theatre in its type of setting is the theatre of the Outdoor Players at Peterborough, New Hampshire. The fairly level boulder-strewn stage is framed by two large trees; pine trees, maples, hemlocks, and thick undergrowth are on both sides; there is a wooded hillside at the back. The stage is separated from the auditorium by a little brook.[72]

The Coburn Players have been largely responsible for the spread of the interest in the nature theatre idea in the colleges and normal schools of the Middle West. Outdoor playhouses have been planned or built by at least a dozen of these institutions. The playhouse at Western Illinois State Normal College at Macomb is typical. A clearing was made in a wooded ravine, and a raised stage, seventy-five feet deep and forty feet wide, was constructed of earth and sodded. An informal arrangement of trees and shrubs constituted the background.[73]

There are many other nature theatres, but the stage arrangement is similar in all.[74]

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[71] Ibid., pp. 71-72.

[72] Ibid., p. 74.

[73] Ibid., pp. 76-77.

[74] Ibid., pp. 69, 71, 73, 76, 78, 80-85.

The garden theatre is very small, seating at most only a few hundred persons. The formally-shaped stage has for a background conventional arrangements of trees and shrubs.[75] There are garden theatres in some of the Italian villas and in Holland and a few in France and Germany.[76] At Mannheim, Germany, the stage background was formed by a combination of hedges and trellises, the latter often in elaborate design.[77] In the United States there are several of the garden theatres. The Brookside Theatre at Mount Kisco, New York, has a stage which is of turf and is framed by the projecting arms of a pergola.[78]
It

> can be curtained by hangings which stretch between two of the pergola columns. . . . . The theatre lies in a narrow valley, and the high hills on either side . . . . create a sense of intimacy that is impossible in most outdoor playhouses . . . . .[79]

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[75] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

[76] *Ibid.*, pp. 89-99.

[77] *Ibid.*, p. 98.

[78] *Ibid.*, pp. 99-101.

[79] *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

CHAPTER III

SOME ANCIENT METHODS REVIVED

Some of the ancient methods have been discarded; others have survived.

The mask, rather infrequently employed at the present time, had its origin before the Greek classical period. The masks of the time of Aeschylus and a little later were made of cork, wood, bark, or linen and covered with plaster; they covered the entire head. Masks were used only occasionally by the Romans.[1]

Rather recently, some people in this country have become interested in the use of masks which cover the face.

Wladyslaw Benda, a Polish illustrator and painter who came to the United States in 1900, made his first mask in 1914 to be worn to a masquerade. From that time he continued to make masks until his collection numbered fifty-six in 1926. In 1919 his masks appeared on the stage in the *Greenwich Village Follies*, New York. He has found that the most satisfactory material is stiff paper glued in layers, coated with shellac, and finally painted in oil colors.[2]

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[1] Joseph Richard Taylor, *The Story of the Drama Beginnings to the Commonwealth* (Boston: Expression Company, 1930), pp. 177-179.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 179-181.

Gordon Craig is in the van of the reformers who plead for the adoption of the mask on the stage. Some people feel that since the mask makes it impossible to register on the face the ebb and flow of passionate thought, it should not be used; Mr. Craig sees no advantage in facial expression and therefore would depend on the disguise of the mask to express exactly the idea which the playwright intended.[3]

"The most striking employment of masks in modern drama is that of Eugene O'Neill in 'The Great God Brown'."[4] In this play the masks portray the moods and the development of the dual personalities of some of his actors. No one else has used masks in quite this way.[5] There is a frequent change of masks as the actor shows one side or the other of his personality. For one example, early in the play Dion with his mask on is alert, aggressive, facing the world; Margaret is in love with him. Mask off, he is a timid, shrinking idealist; Margaret says she doesn't know him, and is frightened.[6] The changes in the development of the

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[3] Ibid., pp. 182-183.

[4] Ibid., p. 183.

[5] Ibid., p. 184.

[6] Ibid., p. 184 and Burns Mantle, editor, The Best Plays of 1925-26 (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1926), pp. 87-88.

personalities throughout the play are shown by different masks until, at the end, Brown passes for Dion by wearing his clothes and his mask.[7]

> In the Pasadena (California) production of O'Neill's 'Lazarus Laughed,' April 1928, three hundred masks were used ranging in size from those of the Greek to the semimask of the Italian _commedia dell'arte_ and the ordinary fullface form.[8]

S. S. Incorporated used masks for the characters who were types, as the office girls.

The _periaktoi_ of the present time had a Greek ancestor, the _periaktos_ (plural _periaktoi_), an instrument for changing the scene on the rare occasions when such a change was needed.[9]

> In construction the device somewhat resembled a revolving bookcase except that it was three-sided rather than quadrilateral; one of these revolving triangular prisms was placed at each end of the back scene; each of the three sides contained a symbolical painting representing a sea or land scene . . . . . Since the back scene usually depicted a temple, a palace or a private house,[10]

a revolution of the _periaktos_, and sometimes a change in the statue in front of the building, could make an instantaneous change in the location of the play.[11]

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[7] Burns Mantle, _ibid._, pp. 107-120.

[8] Joseph Richard Taylor, _op. cit._, p. 184.

[9] _Ibid._, p. 160.

[10] _Ibid._, p. 160.

[11] _Ibid._, p. 160.

On at least two occasions in modern times the *periaktoi* have been employed. Martin Harvey, an English actor, used two *periaktoi* in his production of "The Taming of the Shrew." Each was large enough for the setting at the side of the stage; he had an appropriate backdrop. Joseph Urban, in his designs for "The Follies of 1918," used three or four narrow *periaktoi* at each side and the various backdrops.[12]

The trilogy is one more contribution of the Greeks to the modern stage. Aeschylus used three plays, "The House of Atreus" being the "Agamemnon," "The Libation-Bearers," and "The Furies," to tell of the return of Agamemnon from the Trojan war, bringing a Trojan captive, Cassandra, who was soon killed; the successful plotting of his wife, Clytemnestra, for his death so that she might marry Aegisthus; the plan of Orestes, the son, to avenge his father's death; the sorrow of Electra, the sister, who must live as a slave instead of as a princess; the killing of Clytemnestra by Orestes and of Aegisthus by Pylades, Orestes' friend; Orestes' torture by the Furies; and finally the intervention of Athena to save Orestes from death for having killed his mother.[13]

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[12] Kenneth Macgowan, *The Theatre of Tomorrow* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1921), p. 28.

[13] E. D. A. Morshead, E. H. Plumptre, Gilbert Murray, and B. B. Rogers, *Nine Greek Dramas* (Harvard Classics, No. VIII. New York: P. F. Collier & Son Company, 1909), pp. 7-165.

It may not at first seem probable that a modern playwright could

> get modern psychological approximation of Greek sense of fate into . . . . a play, which an intelligent audience of today, possessed by no belief in gods or supernatural retribution, could accept and be moved by,[14]

but the success of Mourning Becomes Electra by Eugene O'Neill shows that one of the plots of Greek tragedy can be used as the theme for a modern play. "The House of Atreus" by Aeschylus furnished the inspiration for Mr. O'Neill's dramas of the house of Mannon, a New England family.

The story is told in three full plays: "The Homecoming," "The Hunted," "The Haunted." As they are presented on the stage, they are played within six hours with an interval for dinner after the first play, "The Homecoming."[15]

"The House of Atreus" contained a chorus; so also these plays have several types of townsfolk who serve as "a chorus representing the town come to look and listen and spy on the rich and exclusive Mannon."[16]

The reader follows the fortunes of the family through Ezra Mannon's return from the Civil War; his death at the hands of his wife, Christine, so that she may be free to

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[14] Burns Mantle, editor, The Best Plays of 1931-32, (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1932) p. 65.

[15] Ibid., p. 65.

[16] Ibid., p. 66.

continue her affair with Adam Brant, the son of Ezra's father, David, and a servant girl; the plan of Lavinia, daughter of Ezra and Christine, to avenge her father's death--she came into the room just before he died and had proof that he was murdered; the distress of Orin, brother to Lavinia, as he listens to the conflicting stories of his mother's actions and is finally convinced of her guilt; the killing of Brant a few days after Ezra's death, by Orin with Lavinia as an accomplice; Christine's suicide when she learns of Brant's death; the futility of the attempt made by Orin and Lavinia to forget the past when they journey to the South Sea Islands sometime during the two years after "The Homecoming"; the continued growth in resemblance of Orin to his father and of Lavinia to her mother; Orin's torture by the reiteration of his conscience that his act drove his mother to take her own life; Orin's plan to prevent the marriage of Lavinia and Peter, a lifelong friend, by writing the history of the Mannon family for Peter to read before his proposed wedding; the taunts of his sister which cause Orin to shoot himself; during the expression of intense feeling by Lavinia, whose one thought is to marry Peter, her revelation of enough of the past so that Peter leaves her; and, finally, comes to Lavinia's realization that, as punishment for her

part in the crime, she must live alone in the Mannon house the rest of her life.[17]

The custom of giving plays in the open air has also come to us from the Greeks.[18] It has continued through the centuries until at the present time there are many theatres which use the out-of-doors for their productions: the nature theatres, the garden theatres, the Passion Play at Ober-Ammergau.[19]

The platform stage came into use with the Miracle plays. When the plays had been taken from the church and were given in the churchyard, the special localized propertied places may have been platforms.[20]

> In France the guilds of carpenters built a dozen fantastic houses along the back of a platform more than a hundred feet long, and, from Heaven at one end to Hell's mouth at the other, past the inn, the temple, the house of the high priest, the action of these mysteries, these miracles of the saints pass on to rude comedy[21]

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[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 66-117.

[18] Joseph Richard Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

[19] Seldon Cheney, *The Open-Air Theatre* (New York: Mitchell Kennerly, 1918), pp. 10-11.

[20] W. H. Loveland, Course in *Early English Plays* (Springfield, Massachusetts: Boston University School of Education, July-August, 1934), Lecture.

[21] Kenneth Macgowan, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

as the devils receive their victims into the yawning flames of their "mansion."[22]

There is one survival of this custom. F. T. Marinetti, one exponent of the futurist movement, believes in "simultaneity" and "compenetration" from which the "synthesis" of the Futurist Synthetic Theatre is derived. He presents two or three places simultaneously on the stage and has juxtaposition of people and actions whose only relationship is, perhaps, spiritual. As far as the physical arrangement of this stage is concerned, Marinetti merely goes back to the platform stage of the French mystery plays.[23]

Already various experiments have been mentioned for creating intimacy between the actor and the playgoer, but this idea is by no means new. At the time of Shakespeare some of the audience sat on stools on the stage or even on the stage itself.[24] "The stage was a platform projecting into the pit, open on three sides, and without any front

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[22] Ibid., p. 167.

[23] Ibid., pp. 250-252.

[24] Harley Granville-Barker and G. B. Harrison, editors, A Companion to Shakespeare Studies (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934), p. 25.

curtain,"[25] so some of the spectators standing in the pit must have been very near the actors.

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[25] William Allan Neilson and Ashley Horace Thorndike, The Facts About Shakespeare (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931), p. 122.

CHAPTER IV

LIGHTING

One of the most important of the elements of modern magic in stage presentations is lighting. The way in which the stage and actors should be made visible to the audience has always been an essential part of the acted drama, but there are two factors--the constant experiment with electricity and color and the resulting increase in the knowledge of the ways in which they may serve the stage, and the new concept of the unifying power of light which "creates the desired fusion that can make stage floor, scenery, and actor one"[1]--that have made light one of the first considerations in the production of a drama.

The dynamic quality of light--its ability to fascinate the observer--is shown in many ways.[2] Candle light, the light of a fire on the hearth, the light of a destructive fire--all have attracted the attention of watchers. Animals and insects come to a light. On a summer night a light in the open is a focus for insects of various kinds; animals ordinarily timid will be drawn to a light, as deer.

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[1] Lee Simonson, "Appia's contribution to the modern stage." Theatre Arts Monthly, XVI (August, 1932), 632.

[2] Joseph Richard Taylor, Course in The New Theatre and the New Drama (Boston: Boston University, September 1927--January 1928), Lecture.

> The psychological effect of light has been very carefully studied. It has been found that an artificially lighted theatre creates a mental condition in which imitation is more easily accepted and in which the spectator is less exacting.[3]

He is more immediately affected by his sensitiveness to variations of light in the theatre than he is by sensations of color, shape, or sound.[4]

Until very recent times light on the stage meant but one thing: illumination. The methods of lighting theatres from the days of the Greeks to the present have been the following: daylight, candle, oil-lamps, gas, limelight, electricity.[5]

Now various types of electric lights are used; they are located in different parts of the stage and theatre according to the requirements of the production. In many cases they are still used for illumination, but light on the stage, in the modern sense, has another connotation; it is light which helps make the production a unit by intensifying the atmosphere of the play.[6]

The light that is used for illumination has for its object to make all things equally bright and visible, as a

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[3] *Ibid.*, Lecture.

[4] Lee Simonson, *op. cit.*, p. 639.

[5] Joseph Richard Taylor, *op. cit.*, Lecture.

[6] Lee Simonson, *op. cit.*, p. 636.

fish in water. In this diffused light we recognize objects without emotion.[7]

Living or concentrated light, which is of great importance to the stage today, was revealed by Appia.[8]

> . . . . the light that is blocked by an object and casts shadows has a sculpturesque quality that by the vehemence of its definition, by the balance of light and shade, can carve an object before our eyes. It is capable of arousing us emotionally because it can so emphasize and accent forms as to give them new force and meaning.[9]

The way in which the regulation of light can evoke atmosphere was shown

> in the second act of 'Tristan' when Appia's settings were put on at the Scala of Milan. The act takes place in a garden at night. Instead of giving it the lighting suitable to an ordinary moon-lit night, Appia wished to express the radiance in the souls of the lovers. For them night, though it enshrouded them, did not exist. The scene was therefore illuminated in an entirely unreal manner, diffused and almost supernatural, with the warm intensity of a tropical night. When King Mark entered, this light changed suddenly; the hostile atmosphere was bathed in a cold, sharp light, a sad and colorless dawn. The effect was all the more astonishing because it was so strikingly in harmony with the music. The sensitive spectator did not fail to notice it and to feel a profound emotion.[10]

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[7] *Ibid.*, p. 636.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 636.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 636.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 619.

Another use of controlled and directed light to project the deepest emotional meaning of an event as well as its apparent action could be shown in "Romeo and Juliet." "As the lovers pass, their souls meet in a glance."[11] To portray the dramatic situation, the ballroom scene might be plunged into semidarkness and the two lovers illumined with a light as intense as their emotion.[12]

The lighting of any modern production, as Jones's "Richard III," Geddes' "Hamlet," Reinhardt's "Danton's Death," or Jessner's "Othello" is planned so that it dramatizes with light and shadow to interpret mood and create atmosphere.[13]

Light can also help build scenes. Different intensities of intersecting volumes of light can create distance as effectively as actual spacing measured in feet.[14]

> An actor stepping from a brilliant funnel of light into half-shadow may recede far more perceptibly than if he walked fifteen feet upstage through an even radiance. The sky beyond the platform of Elsinore can be infinitely remote although it may be almost within reach of Hamlet's outstretched hand at the rampart's rim. Light can contract the deepest stage or extend a shallow one. The heaviest piece of scenery appears flimsy until it is reinforced with shadows that suggest its mass and

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[11] Ibid., p. 619.

[12] Ibid., p. 619.

[13] Ibid., p. 638.

[14] Ibid., p. 642.

> weight and veil the actual material of its linen surface. A designer knows how quickly at light-rehearsal a flood of light from the wrong source can literally blow a setting to pieces, flatten out the heaviest column; an electrician's mistake in bringing on a single extra lamp during a performance can also have the same result....[15]

Costumes sometimes undergo a change in color when they are lighted, as two examples will show. In the Norman Bel Geddes "Hamlet," Polonius' gown was gray, soft green, or lavender, according to the light played upon it. In the last act of "Elizabeth The Queen" Elizabeth's gown was of a copper cloth covered with black chiffon stitched to it with black and gold thread. During most of the act the light was so softened that the dress appeared dull; at the end, however, after Elizabeth had parted from Essex and he descended through the trapdoor, the first shaft of warm morning light fell upon the Queen turning her to bronze.[16]

Since light emphasizes the dramatic values of a performance and heightens the emotional response of the audience to them by suggesting mood and atmosphere for the stage settings, making these complement the work of the actors and permitting the audience to see the expressions on the actors' faces, a light-plot is an accepted part of every

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[15] Ibid., p. 642.

[16] Lee Simonson, The Stage is Set (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1932), pp. 372-373.

modern performance.[17] It parallels the plot of the play and requires a separate rehearsal.[18] Sometimes several days are needed for the light-rehearsal for a large production as it is very like the rehearsal for an orchestra. Each lamp is like a member of the organization; it must do its work perfectly in the ensembles; it must be capable of carrying a solo.[19]

The successful lighting of modern plays is the result of the work of many people, but the foundations for it were laid by Adolphe Appia. He was born in 1862 in Geneva. Early in his life, he became interested in music and the theatre.[20] His dissatisfaction with theatrical technique and stagecraft "made him discover what was needed to give dramatic art its full value and to re-establish the theatre in its original dignity."[21] He finally wrote "Die Musik und die Inscenierung" which appeared in 1899. This work contains Appia's entire philosophy and all the reforms he proposed for a revival of scenic art.[22]

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[17] Lee Simonson, "Appia's contribution to the modern stage." Theatre Arts Monthly, XVI (August, 1932), 632, 641, 638.

[18] Ibid., p. 638.

[19] Ibid., p. 641.

[20] Ibid., pp. 616-617.

[21] Ibid., p. 617.

[22] Ibid., p. 617.

> Appia's supreme intuition was his recognition that light can play as directly on our emotions as music does. . . . . The association between light and joy, between sorrow and darkness, is deeply rooted and tinges the imagery of almost every literature and every religion. It shows itself in such common couplings as 'merry and bright,' 'sad and gloomy.' How much less lonely we feel walking along a country road in a pitch-black night when the distant yellow patch of a farm-house window punctures the darkness! The flare of a campfire in a black pine forest at night cheers us even though we are not near enough to warm our hands at it.[23]

One of his greatest contributions to the modern stage was his realization that there are two kinds of light: in addition to light devoted to illuminating the entire space evenly there is plastic light--living or concentrated light--[24] which has already been discussed.[25]

His reforms took in the technical processes of stagecraft: painting, lighting, scenery; the actor and his education, costume, and ability to convey the idea of space as he moves through the acting area; the duties of the director and the stage manager. Appia felt that the aesthetic problem of scenic design was to unify the perpendicular painted scenery, the horizontal floor, the moving actor, and the lighted space. Appia's vision led him to understand the

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[23] Ibid., p. 639.

[24] Ibid., p. 636.

[25] Cf. ante, pp. 39-42.

reasons for the inadequacy of the stage lighting systems of his day and to predict the present technical set-up.[26] He said:

> Light can be colored, either by its own quality or by colored glass slides; it can project pictures, of every degree of intensity, varying from the faintest blurred tonalities to the sharpest definition.[27]

Adolphe Appia and Gordon Craig were engaged in bringing about reforms in stage setting at about the same time.

> The credit for originating the new movement should be given, so far as mere chronology goes, to Appia rather than to Craig.
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> Appia and Craig simply gave expression almost simultaneously to a movement that had begun to stir men's minds during the period beginning 1895. Appia responded a little more promptly than Craig.[28]

Gordon Craig was born in London in 1872. He was on the stage from 1889 to 1896 when he decided to devote himself to the study of drawing and woodcarving.[29]

> In 1900 he began a series of operatic and theatrical productions in which he put into practice ideas in regard to scenery and the mechanical details of stage man-

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[26] Lee Simonson, "Appia's contribution to the modern stage." Theatre Arts Monthly, XVI (August, 1932), 618, 632, 640.

[27] Ibid., p. 641.

[28] Joseph Richard Taylor, op. cit., Lecture.

[29] Ibid., Lecture.

agement which were very novel. His success with these innovations decided him to devote his entire time to the art of production.[30]

His contributions to the theory of modern art began with a vigorous attack upon realism.[31] The footlights must go, he said. No one knew why they were put on the ground, and they must be removed as soon as possible.[32] He gave full value to lighting effects.[33] His plans for "The Pretenders" at Copenhagen in 1926 involved the casting of shadows and the projecting of a light design by the Linnebach lantern; since the use of shadows and of projected design had been in vogue for some years, he cannot be considered an innovator but a contributor to the modern lighting.[34] He used rectangular forms and steps and screens, but his sets are mainly "mysterious poems of shape and color."[35] He was so anxious for unity that he wished one man to do every-

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[30] Ibid., Lecture.

[31] Ibid., Lecture.

[32] Kenneth Macgowan, The Theatre of Tomorrow (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1921), pp. 94-95.

[33] Theodore Komisarjevsky and Lee Simonson, Settings and Costumes of the Modern Stage (New York: The Studio Publications Inc., 1933), p. 11.

[34] Lee Simonson, The Stage is Set (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1932), pp. 333-334.

[35] Theodore Komisarjevsky and Lee Simonson, op. cit., p. 11.

thing: design the scenes, control the actor, even write the play. He became impatient at last even with the actor, and wished to substitute for him the übermarionette. Extreme as this view was, it was stimulating to workers in the theatre. Craig's original conceptions have served more than those of any other designer to widen the boundaries of the theatre of the imagination.[36]

Lee Simonson thinks that the sense of liberation Gordon Craig brought to workers in the theatre was largely a delusion; he ignored technical problems altogether. He has never shown ability as a critic or as a designer to push to a solution any problem he has presented. His doctrine that a single directing mind is necessary for a successful production had been uttered years earlier by the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen. He advocated the use of screens, but they proved clumsy and impractical.[37] In no uncertain terms Mr. Simonson explains his theory that Gordon Craig is a thwarted amateur.[38]

A third important leader in the reform of stage lighting was David Belasco, the pioneer of electrical prog-

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[36] Geoffrey Holme, editor, Design in the Theatre (London: The Studio, Limited, 1927), pp. 24, 16.

[37] Lee Simonson, The Stage is Set (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1932), pp. 314, 317-318.

[38] Ibid., pp. 314-344.

ress in our theatre. He was born in California in 1853. In his youth he became associated with the stage; by 1895 he was an independent manager. Until his death in 1931 he was an uncompromising realist,[39] but he experimented constantly to achieve more successful stage effects. In 1908-09 he first employed the "baby spot" or small movable lights with lenses which he used thereafter. As early as 1879 he produced a play without footlights.[40]

> He did without them in several productions at the old Madison Square Theatre, and he did not use them according to his own statement, in either 'Darling of the Gods' in 1902-3 or 'Adrea' in 1904-5.[41]

In the fall of 1914 he decided to eliminate them altogether: the footlights below and the border lights, corresponding to them, above. He substituted large incandescent lamps in hoods and reflectors just behind the proscenium opening and also in a special hood which he built out still further forward above the apron. The practical value of the large incandescents instead of the small border lights was soon recognized by Arthur Hopkins and Robert E. Jones. They and an

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[39] Montrose J. Moses, editor, Representative American Dramas National and Local (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1926, p. 670, and "David Belasco," The Americana Annual An Encyclopedia of Current Events, 1932, 100.

[40] Kenneth Macgowan, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

[41] Ibid., p. 50.

increasing number of producers have since benefited by David Belasco's innovation.[42]

From the beginning of the century until the present time, science, interpreted by a large number of people, has made remarkable contributions to the lighting of the stage. Some changes have already been indicated; there have been many others.

Formerly, only white lights were employed in the theatre. Today very few white lights are to be seen where the old lighting system is still employed. The usual light for daylight scenes is a yellow light, which is far less trying to the actors and produces a much more natural effect. More and more the attempt is made to get the lights as near as possible to the conditions in nature which they are supposed to represent.

In the new method of lighting, light usually seems to come from some definite place as it does in our actual experience: the sun, the moon, a lamp, a chandelier, a candle, an open window, etc. This type of lighting casts the shadows which are so necessary for interpreting mood.

Of the four sources of light in the theatre at the beginning of modernism--the border lights above, the footlights below, the spot lights at the sides in the wings, a

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[42] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

light thrown from behind through transparencies--the spotlight was the only source which provided shadows, and which, therefore, had dramatic quality.[43] As the possibilities of the "spot" were realized, the other methods of lighting fell into disuse; the "spot" is now capable of producing remarkable effects.[44]

The way to utilize the power of colored light for painting pictures and arousing emotion puzzled the producers for many years.

At one time small incandescent bulbs were dipped in dye, but this proved unsatisfactory because of the uncertainty of the color and the rapidity with which it faded in use.[45]

For a time it seemed as if Fortuny, an Italian, had solved the problem. Early in this century he had the light from powerful arcs thrown against colored bands of silk which reflected it onto the stage. The color of the light could very easily be changed, but the indirect lighting re-

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[43] Joseph Richard Taylor, Course in The New Theatre and the New Drama (Boston: Boston University, September 1927-January 1928), Lecture.

[44] Lee Simonson, "Appia's contribution to the modern stage." Theatre Arts Monthly, XVI (August, 1932), 640.

[45] Kenneth Macgowan, op. cit., p. 53.

quired more current than the direct and created a great deal of heat.[46]

To improve the surface on which the light fell, so that the light might be more diffused, he devised a domed silk sky by exhausting air from between two curved surfaces of silk, the outer one fastened to a folding frame of steel. This reflected the light well but the creases and joints showed in the silk, and air was likely to leak in.

By the end of ten years such strides had been made in the knowledge of lighting that his system was superseded by far better devices.[47]

The coming of the larger incandescent lamps made possible the filtering of white light through colored mediums of gelatine or glass. With lights overhead it was impossible to change these mediums by hand. Three or four times as many units of colored light as were actually needed to cast the color on the stage were employed, and the effects were secured by turning off some lamps and turning on others, but only very accurate and permanent primary colors could make this system adequate.[48]

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[46] Ibid., pp. 54-56.

[47] Kenneth Macgowan, Continental Stagecraft (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1922), p. 70.

[48] Kenneth Macgowan, The Theatre of Tomorrow (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1921), p. 53.

Linnebach, head inspector of the Court Theatre in Dresden, still used arc lamps, but the light passed through transparent slides, and the reflection was from a white wall. The silk dome had been replaced by a plaster or concrete dome.[49]

In some theatres this dome has become a plaster wall, straight up and down and curving very slightly at the ends. In other theatres it is a semicircle like a section of a hollow cylinder or like an ordinary canvas cyclorama, only made of plaster. It may be a true half dome, curving almost from one side of the proscenium to the other, and from the back of the stage up above the top of the proscenium opening.[50]

The plaster dome used so universally in Germany and somewhat in this country has advantages and disadvantages. It makes the sky appear to have great depth; in fact, it is almost impossible for the eye to detect the extent of the distance suggested. It works ideally with a revolving stage, a wagon stage, or a sinking stage. However, its initial cost is large. It cannot be used with a sliding stage, since its ends come practically up to the proscenium. It is

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[49] Joseph Richard Taylor, op. cit., Lecture.

[50] Kenneth Macgowan, The Theatre of Tomorrow (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1921), p. 58.

not practical for American commercial theatres which use the touring system and which therefore need scenery built to fit any stage.[51]

The Ars system, the successor to the Fortuny, added many ingenious lights to a cyclorama of cloth so prepared that it refracts the light in the same way as plaster and so weighted that it cannot wrinkle or stir. It is not a permanent obstruction to the use of the full stage because when not in use, it remains on a vertical roller at one side of the proscenium.[52]

The problem of adequate representation of the sky is difficult if the artist has not a dome or an Ars cyclorama for the projection of his scenes. No dyed drop or painted canvas will give the necessary illusion. The best he can do is to use a method of applying color known as pointilage: instead of using blue for the sky, the different shades of blue, green, and yellow which go into the mixture are placed directly on the canvas. As the light strikes these colors, they blend. The walls seem more solid and the skies have less suggestion of canvas about them; also the light that strikes these surfaces becomes more intense.[53]

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[51] Ibid., pp. 59-60.

[52] Ibid., p. 61.

[53] Ibid., pp. 62-63.

For the Ars cyclorama or the plaster dome a complicated system of lights can project designs, shapes, or photographs on the sky. The artist can literally paint his scenery with light.[54] One of the most important mechanisms for these projections is in Dresden at the State Schauspielhaus. There Linnebach has a dome upon which

> or through varnished silk from the back, he throws, by means of a very simple lantern containing an arc light but no lenses, the design painted on glass. This lantern and the transparent method of projection were used in America with much success by Lee Simonson when the New York Theater Guild mounted Shaw's 'Back to Methuselah' in the spring of 1922. Linnebach has made the mountains of 'William Tell' with projection and the settings of Grabbe's 'Kaiser Heinrich VI' and of the expressionist dramas 'Das Bist Du', 'Gas', and 'Jenseits'.[55]

The projected setting produces an entirely different effect from the old-fashioned scene painting. It brings out the emotional and spiritual qualities of the scene.[56]

> In Kaiser's expressionist play 'From Morn to Midnight', produced by the Theater Guild, Simonson used Linnebach's lantern to make the tree in the snow scene change into a skeleton, an effect that Kaiser was able to foresee only as a shifting of snowflakes upon naked boughs.[57]

For a long time the footlights have been in disfavor. They do not light the stage in a natural manner: the under

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[54] *Ibid.*, p. 62.

[55] Kenneth Macgowan, *Continental Stagecraft* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1922), pp. 72-73.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[57] *Ibid.*, p. 78.

side of a table or the rest of the actor's face may not receive adequate lighting if the overhead lights are not sufficiently bright. Even if the amount of light is right, the effect of the light does not heighten the dramatic quality of the play; objects illuminated by the "foots" seem lifeless because they are illuminated equally wherever the light strikes them;[58] the footlights have a flattening effect on the actors' faces and wipe out all expression from human features.[59] From the time when he first produced a play without footlights until he finally eliminated them thirty-five years later, in 1914, David Belasco thought that some other form of lighting would produce better effects. With the increase in use of the large incandescent lamps and the spot-lights,[60] the footlights have become unnecessary and in many cases have been discarded, especially in theatres in which intimacy is established by having the stage separated from the spectators by a low line of steps.[61]

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[58] Joseph Richard Taylor, op. cit., Lecture.

[59] Lee Simonson, "Appia's contribution to the modern stage." Theatre Arts Monthly, XVI (August, 1932), 641.

[60] Kenneth Macgowan, The Theatre of Tomorrow (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1921), pp. 50-51.

[61] Norman Bel Geddes, Horizons (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1932), p. 146.

Ever since Appia stated that the spot light is of "greatest importance in maintaining the expressive effect of the total stage picture"[62] great emphasis has been placed upon it.

> For a while lamps were moved on bridges above the stage and literally followed the action of a play. But the spotlight has been perfected so that it can be equally mobile while its source remains fixed. Lenses of varying sizes--six or eight inches, giving a varying maximum spread in combination with electric lamps of 250,500 or 1,000 watts--are focussed to cover overlapping areas or concentrated into a 'spot' the size of a face. Each is controlled by a separate dimmer that regulates its intensity over a range of a hundred fixed points varying from full to out. For a modern production as many as a hundred such spotlights may be in use, each covering a particular area of the stage floor, hundred of shafts of light criss-crossing from iron stanchions at each side of the stage, from one or more pipes overhead, casting funnels of light of different colours and intensity which the actor walks into or out of. They are in continual flux, ebbing and flowing, merging and separating, but always slowly and subtly enough so that there is never a 'jump' by which a spectator can become directly aware of the changes that are imperceptibly taking place before his eyes. He feels their effect before he realizes that the changes have occurred.[63]

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[62] Lee Simonson, op. cit., p. 640.

[63] Ibid., pp. 640-641.

CHAPTER V

SCENERY

Scenery as well as lighting makes its important contributions to the wizardry of the modern stage.

While the results achieved by scenery are sometimes breath-taking, the incentive for design is to make the play as real to the audience as it was to the playwright. The producer's problem varies with the type of play he wishes to present. A play of contemporary material may convey an idea to which the playgoer is indifferent or antagonistic. With a classic play there is an added problem: the actors must recreate an experience which had certain emotional effects upon the original audiences because of the background which they associated with the play; to a present-day audience the settings would not have the same significance. The total stage picture should be so arranged that it works with the actors in getting the theme of the play "across the footlights"--real or imaginary--to the audience.[1]

No one method of setting the stage can be used for all the plays.[2] Even the same play offers to the designers many possibilities for interpreting the mood or moods.

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[1] Lee Simonson, The Stage is Set (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1932), pp. 96-100, 107.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

Stage effects can be essential to an adequate interpretation of a play. In "Marco Millions" Eugene O'Neill planned as scenery representing the patient pattern of Eastern civilization a semicircle of figures who appeared in different scenes: before a mosque, a Buddist temple, and the Great Wall of China. The glow from the steamer's stokehold and the rhythmic crunch of coal are vital to the success of "The Hairy Ape." "Dynamo" requires a special type of dynamo for the death of the hero.[3]

The very simple settings achieved in some cases by the scene designers, as those of Sir Philip Ben Greet in his revival of Shakespearean customs, have not met with universal favor; the public and the press have preferred the decorative elaborations of "Marco Millions," "Volpone," and "Elizabeth the Queen."[4]

During the life of the drama, the designs for stage settings have been of many types.

When plays have been given out-of-doors in the daytime, from the inception of the drama to about the middle of the seventeenth century, and occasionally since then to the present, scenery and simplicity have usually been synonymous. During the Restoration, the size of the theatre; the fact that the theatre was no longer open to the sky, leading

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[3] *Ibid*., pp. 116-117, 120.

[4] *Ibid*., pp. 122-124.

to the use of primitive lighting apparatus; and the interest of the Court in display--all contributed to the use of highly ornate and crudely colorful settings. These conditions continued for about a century, then reform set in. Realistic settings began to replace those of a more elaborate pattern. By the end of the nineteenth century, the great skill of some producers in achieving realistic effects produced an idea of great importance: scenery can be made to reinforce the mood of the play. A number of the realists felt that their type of setting could provide the needed medium for expression;[5] some students of the theatre, some designers, and some producers advocated a new technique.

The foundation for the new stage design was laid by the German Meiningen company. In 1874 it tried to secure naturalism and accuracy of detail by means of plastic, built-up, life-like scenery; it set the stage flats at various angles to make rooms and streets look naturalistic; it used a cyclorama of canvas; projectors lighted the stage from the side; bits of scenery and furniture along the footlights suggested the imaginary fourth wall.[6]

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[5] Geoffrey Holme, editor, Design in the Theatre (London: The Studio, Limited, 1927), pp. 17-19.

[6] Theodore Komisarjevsky and Lee Simonson, Settings and Costumes of the Modern Stage (New York: The Studio Publications Inc., 1933), p. 9.

Antoine, the founder of the Théâtre-Libre in 1887, followed the methods of the German company. In his attempt to apply the principles of stage naturalism in all their completeness, he and his followers discovered that the scenery can help interpret the mood of the play.

A group of young writers, led by Paul Fort, attacked the Théâtre-Libre for its search for the exact, and for giving no help to writers of fantasy and imagination. Fort founded the Théâtre Mixte, which after two performances became the Théâtre d'Art. Many of the principles which have since become the commonplaces of the modernist school were promulgated by Fort and his friends; simplification of decoration; the choice, for each scene, of the plastic elements necessary to create its appropriate atmosphere; stylization, complete harmony between scenery and costumes, and the abandonment of the perspective back cloth.[7]

> In 1892 the Théâtre d'Art became the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre and presented 'Pelléas et Mélisande.' . . . . Stanislavsky was present at this performance, and afterwards admitted how much he owed to the decoration by Vogler, and to all the experimental work which was being carried out in Paris towards the end of the last century.[8]

Stanislavsky returned to Russia, and in 1897 with Nemirovich-Dantchenko founded the Moscow Art Theatre. In

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[7] Geoffrey Holme, editor, op. cit., p. 18.

[8] Ibid., pp. 18-19.

their attempt to reform the stage, they pushed naturalism to the extreme, attempting to reproduce actual conditions of life, and raised ensemble acting to a level which has, perhaps, never been reached by any other company of actors.[9]

The perfection of their technique led them to "evoke a kind of symbolic rhythm which was far from being the mere surface realism they had striven for at first."[10]

Influenced to some extent by Stanislavsky, Serge Diaghileff assembled a group of Petrograd painters interested in realism and some Moscow painters in touch with such Parisian movements as Cubism to design the settings for some operas and ballets. These productions, by their very nature, used the elaborate stage decorations of a painted cloth and costumes to match. The real influence of Bakst, the chief designer, was in the minor decorative arts: he brought vivid color to stage properties, as curtains, cushions, and chairs.[11] The opera "Boris Godounoff" shown in Paris in 1907 and Russian Ballets presented since 1909 caused a great sensation, and gradually influenced painters and producers all over the world.[12] The glowing color of

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[9] Ibid., p. 19.

[10] Ibid., p. 19.

[11] Ibid., pp. 19-20.

[12] Theodore Komisarjevsky and Lee Simonson, op. cit., p. 10.

the Ballets, especially those designed by Leon Bakst and danced by Nijinsky, and also "Sumurun," designed by Ernst Stern, first interested the general public in the art of modern design; otherwise the Ballets do not belong to the main trend of the art of the theatre.[13]

Many producers and designers in Europe have shown the ways in which scenery can help create the atmosphere of the play.

Two of the Russian leaders who thought that the actor and the audience should be in harmony were Meyerhold, and Everinov, whose theory of monodrama stated that the whole drama should be staged as if it were seen through the eyes of the principal character.[14]

The great contribution of Adolphe Appia was that a three-dimensional sculpturesque and simplified setting should be used to bring out the full value of the actor on the stage.[15]

A number of producers in Germany have experimented with design. Georg Fuchs whose theories were put into practice on the stage of the new Munchener Künstler Theatre in 1907, said that scenic work should combine the talents of

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[13] Geoffrey Holme, editor, op. cit., pp. 4, 20.

[14] Ibid., p. 26.

[15] Ibid., p. 20.

the landscape painter and of the architect to suit the inner nature of the play.[16] To mention only one of Jessner's interests, his flight of steps was effective at first but lost point with too much repetition.[17] Max Reinhardt, who has done outstanding work in Germany and in other countries is not only a typical producer; he is the most outstanding of *regisseurs*.[18]

During the late nineties, Reinhardt was gradually deserting extreme realism; early in the twentieth century he adapted his realism to the ideas of Craig and Appia as evidenced in his Kleines and Neues theatres and later in his Kammerspielhaus.[19] "By 1905 he was well launched upon the exploitation of the new method of staging." With him there developed a group of designers, producers, artist-directors.[20] He continued his experiments: finally he remodeled one of the circus buildings in Berlin into the Grosses Schauspielhaus. Here the stage is upon the floor, in the midst of the spectators. The actors reach this space

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[16] Theodore Komisarjevsky and Lee Simonson, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

[17] Geoffrey Holme, editor, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

[18] Kenneth Macgowan, *The Theatre of Tomorrow* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1921), p. 17.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

from runways passing beneath the seats of the audience and from portals near the stage. The huge stage is equipped with plaster dome, revolving stage, and curtains; from it steps and platforms lead down into the orchestra.[21] There seems a great difference between this huge theatre and the small buildings in which Reinhardt started his work, but the principle involved is the same in both, as it is in all his work: to establish intimacy between the actors and the audience.[22]

His chief designer was Ernst Stern, but Roller, Arlik, Esler, and Dietz also worked for him.[23]

The synthesis in modern stage production--the fusion of setting, lights, actors, and play--Gordon Craig would obtain by design, backed by color. He thinks that the stage is something to be made over into a new art of pure design, pure movement. One way in which he would accomplish his reform is by the use of folding screens of all widths and heights, utilized by him in his production of "Hamlet" at the Moscow Art Theatre. He would banish the footlights and false perspective.[24] His theories and those of Adolphe

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[21] Ibid., pp. 191, 196-198.

[22] Ibid., pp. 268-269.

[23] Geoffrey Holme, editor, op. cit., p. 24.

[24] Kenneth Macgowan, op. cit., pp. 24, 79, 46, 70, 75.

Appia,

> working out through the practice of some fifty scenic artists, resulted within fifteen years in the creation of a plastic stage. Except for the brilliant productions of the Russians, the old two-dimensional scenery disappeared. Settings, like actors, came in three dimensions.[25]

For one example pillars were molded in the round, or at least the half-round. While false perspective is still occasionally used for representing distant objects, in most cases it has been replaced by the architectural or plastic stage.[26]

In England not many of the theatrical managers have engaged real painters; however, Norman Wilkinson, Charles Ricketts, Lovat Fraser, Augustus John, and C. B. Cochran have been employed to design settings for the stage.[27]

The modern movement in designing did not start in the United States until about 1912. Then different designers, influenced by European achievements, began to show the American playgoers some of the possibilities latent in stage setting. Joseph Urban, returning from Vienna, designed a set, rich in detail, for the Boston Opera, and soon was painting skies so rich in color that they were called Urban

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[25] _Ibid_., p. 102.

[26] _Ibid_., p. 102.

[27] Theodore Komisarjevsky and Lee Simonson, _op_. _cit_., p. 11.

blue. Robert Edmond Jones, who had watched Reinhardt's productions at the Deutsches Theatre, planned brilliant costumes for "The Man Who Married A Dumb Wife"--costumes of yellow, orange, and vermillion accented with black--and a setting which contained a silver and black house-front. Shortly afterwards, at the Washington Square Players, Lee Simonson and other designers used the same vivid coloring for the costumes and settings.

The use of bright colors instead of the drab mauves and browns and grays of the nineties was only one evidence of modernism;[28] the setting was now recognized as an aid to interpreting the script and vitalizing the theme of the play.

The interest of the public in the legitimate stage has given many designers an opportunity to reveal their talents. Since a study of the results achieved reveals that there has been a similarity of purpose and, in some cases, of methods, a discussion of a few leading designers will show the trend of the times.

Robert Edmond Jones has a rare sense of the type of setting required to interpret the meaning of a play. He has a constant desire to take the audience, by his designs, into the region where the ideal play takes place. During some periods of the development of the drama words alone have

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[28] *Ibid.*, p. 95.

carried the theme, but now people are particularly eye-conscious. Since Jones feels that color is emotion, he makes very effective use of color to help the audience share the mood of the play:[29] in a scene in "The Redemption" he has one side of the room dusky while the leading character, in the other, is flooded with amber light. Abstraction may achieve his purpose: the setting for "The Song of Roland" has, in front of the castle, figures in armor grouped to suggest the impenetrability of a mediaeval fortress.[30]

His inspiration is derived directly from the plays. As he reads the script, his conception of the design comes to him suddenly from the feeling, the quality, the mood, and the intention of the play and the playwright. The people, their grouping, their clothes, the light, the background appear to him complete in detail.

Then he makes drawings of these picturings of his imagination. His ground plans are prepared with the greatest care and display an accurate knowledge of stage-craft and construction.[31]

Like Mr. Jones, Norman Bel Geddes considers scenery important for interpreting the script and for helping to fill

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[29] Norris Houghton, "The designer sets the stage." Theatre Arts Monthly, XX (December, 1936), 967-968.

[30] Kenneth Macgowan, op. cit., pp. 115-116, opp. 274.

[31] Norris Houghton, op. cit., 969-970.

the stage with the evidence of dramatic imagination which the audience can share.[32] He realizes that actors, collaborators, onlookers are necessary to the success of the theatre. Like Mr. Jones, he has become director as well as designer: the art of design and the art of direction are, for him, part of one pattern.

He, also, begins his work directly with the script. First, he has every stage direction eliminated, for he thinks that the play itself should indicate the setting necessary. Then he plans the scenes according to his interpretation of the text. In "Dead End," for instance, Mr. Geddes designed the set to look _up_ the street away from the waterfront; the author had called for a set which would look _down_ the street to the river. For each fresh production, he develops a new and distinctive technique.

The movements of the actors on the stage condition Mr. Geddes' designs.[33] His setting for "Hamlet" is a good illustration of his desire to "'visualize the scenes so that a way might be found to have no pauses between them other than the two act intermissions,'"[34] and to have the stage de-

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[32] Theodore Komisarjevsky and Lee Simonson, _op_. _cit_., p. 96.

[33] Norris Houghton, "The designer sets the stage." _Theatre_ _Arts_ _Monthly_, XX (October, 1936), 776-777.

[34] _Ibid_., 778.

signed "entirely from the requirements of acting the scenes in the most forceful way."[35]

He does not make sketches or drawings, but the stage model is more important for him than it is for any other outstanding American designer.

Scenery, he thinks, includes the three-dimensional plastic space, lighting, and clothes, with the last two more important than the scenic background. He believes that the designer should plan both lighting and costumes himself, and uses the utmost care in arranging the details for each in his productions.

> He works out all the sources of light, their intensity, their quality, their color, before a single piece of scenery is constructed, before a rehearsal takes place. . . . . Because of the strong color which he uses in light, his costumes must be planned together with that light, so that their colors will be heightened and not made negative.

In "Dead End" he even provided all the costumes so that he might have exactly what he wanted.[36]

Lee Simonson's definition of scenery is about the same as Mr. Geddes--"'a setting is a plan of action'"--but he places his emphasis differently. First he approaches the technical problems of the production, then the acting problems, and finally the mood and style. In all his designing

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[35] Ibid., 780-781.

[36] Ibid., 783.

he desires the collaboration of designer and director.[37]

He thinks that technical problems should have technical solutions. For "Marco Millions," "Volpone" and "Faust," as examples, he devised unit settings which could be used in a variety of ways. For "Liliom" he found a way to make a railroad crossing convincing on the stage.[38]

Design can be an aid to creating the idea of distance, especially if the object is so placed that it must be seen through the frame of some main part of the setting.

> Thus in 'The Power of Darkness' he got the illusion of a distant field by forcing the audience to gaze at it through a deeply shadowed doorway. In the dim last act of 'The Treasure' he diminished the size of the gravestones as they fell away over a little knoll and then materially increased the illusion by the half-circle of iron above the gate to the cemetery. His most successful illusion came in the scene by the railroad embankment in 'Liliom.' There he gave us a glimpse of distant factory chimneys silhouetted against the sky . . . . and pushed still further back by the heavy stone arch[39]

through which the spectator had to look to see them.

The method of acting a scene may control the design, as two illustrations will show. In "Idiot's Delight" the action governed the entrances and exits, the placing of the window with its view of Alpine peaks, the location of the piano around which much of the acting occurred, the position

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[37] Norris Houghton, "The designer sets the stage." *Theatre Arts Monthly*, XX (November, 1936), 879, 881.

[38] *Ibid.*, 881.

[39] Kenneth Macgowan, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-107.

of the staircase so that scenes could be played on and from it with maximum effectiveness, the provision for room enough for the chorus to dance.[40]

> In 'Roar China,' the action takes place alternately among river-front coolies and on the deck of a British gunboat. The setting may be arranged so that all the action is in view of the gunboat, but Lee Simonson thinks that the continued presence of the gunboat detracts from the significance of the coolies and so planned to have interlocking sails almost hide the boat in some of the scenes.[41]

After he has solved the technical problems, he proceeds to questions of detail and color.

He occasionally makes sketches or pictorial drawings for his own use, not for exhibition; the ground plans he considers most important. He rarely makes models of his settings.[42]

Joseph Urban's most important contributions to modern design have been in technical devices to make the scenery more vivid or more easily presented.[43] He introduced the method known as pointilage of applying color.[44] His

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[40] Norris Houghton, "The designer sets the stage." Theatre Arts Monthly, XX (November, 1936), 880.

[41] Theodore Komisarjevsky and Lee Simonson, op. cit., pp. 97-98.

[42] Norris Houghton, "The designer sets the stage." Theatre Arts Monthly, XX (November, 1936), 880, 882.

[43] Kenneth Macgowan, op. cit., pp. 44, 59, 63, 131, 140.

[44] Ibid., p. 63.

use of the swinging stage and the skeleton setting will be discussed later.[45]

One of the most versatile scene designers on Broadway, Jo Mielziner, says that every play requires a new attack, new methods, another point of departure. "Ethan Frome," Winterset," "Pride and Prejudice," "Romeo and Juliet," "Hamlet," "High Tor"--to mention only a few of the plays for which he has designed the settings--give proof of the success of his theory.[46]

He wishes his settings to become a background for the key scenes, the critical moments of the play--to become "part of the highest life of the play." He thinks that a setting has not fulfilled its highest purpose if it is planned merely to catch the attention of the audience when the curtain first rises or to furnish entertainment for the times during the play when members of the audience becomes bored and their attention wanders to it. Jo Mielziner, like Mr. Geddes, prefers to omit the stage directions and get his ideas for the design directly from the writer's words.[47]

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[45] Cf. post, p. 78, footnote 68; p. 83, footnote 81.

[46] Norris Houghton, "The designer sets the stage." Theatre Arts Monthly, XXI (February, 1937), 115 and Theatre Arts Monthly, XX (December, 1936), 978 and Theatre Arts Monthly, XXI (March, 1937), 179.

[47] Norris Houghton, "The designer sets the stage." Theatre Arts Monthly, XXI (February, 1937), 116.

He, also, feels that the actors in the important situations of the drama suggest the setting. He searches for the most telling line to convey an idea of the atmosphere and the background. This may give him an idea for some part of the setting, as a significant piece of furniture, a quality of light or shadow, or a color combination.[48]

He begins by drawing various groups of figures because

> 'the relation of the human form to the setting and to the furniture, the relation of a person to a doorway, to an opening, to light, is more important than any amount of architectural detail.' . . . . in the theatre where a thousand eyes are fixed upon a woman as she sinks into her chair upon the stage, the line of that chair, its color, its mass, must be carefully calculated with relation to her figure.[49]

Practicability he considers most important.

He draws groups of figures on the stage, a rough ground plan or two, then a complete color sketch with actors and lighting effects indicated, finally ground and working plans. If the production involves a complicated setting, he uses a scaled model. In a dark room he tests the reactions of materials and sketches to various colored light. He plans to supervise the lighting for his stage sets.

When he has time to do the costuming, he decides the

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[48] *Ibid.*, p. 116.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 117.

color scheme for the clothes before he determines the color of the scenery.[50]

Donald Oenslager has a method of work similar to that of Lee Simonson: he starts with the technical problem.

He rarely makes models of his projected settings, but he requires that the students in his courses in stage design in the Yale Department of Drama be able to sketch and paint, for he considers knowledge of those skills essential to successful design.[51]

He wishes his settings to appear the expression of the characters in a play. If his work shows certain definite proportions now characteristic of his style, the result is "an unconscious expression of taste of which he was unaware until it was pointed out."[52]

The color, he thinks, should be in the stage setting. Contrary to tradition, he believes that a comedy may be played against a dark background, and a tragedy against a light.

The designer should be able to indicate to the director the practical solution for all his plans.

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[50] Ibid., p. 117-118.

[51] Norris Houghton, "The designer sets the stage." Theatre Arts Monthly, XX (November, 1936), 885-886.

[52] Ibid., p. 886.

Although stage design is a blend of craft and art, his approach is essentially that of a craftsman. He is apparently tireless in his efforts to have every detail as he wishes it.[53]

In their attempts to make the scenery reveal the atmosphere more effectively, the designers and producers have tried many devices.

One method of escape from realism was to reduce the setting to a formal arrangement of more or less permanent materials, the idea which led Gordon Craig to invent screens for the production of "Hamlet" in 1912 at the Moscow Art Theatre.

He had always liked to use high massed walls, high towers, large abstract surfaces. He decided to build his scenes from screens of many folds and various sizes, all neutral in color and, as he thought, easily arranged in an infinite variety of shapes.[54]

> Thus a screen of wide folds could be bent at a right angle or prolonged off stage to form the wall of a building, or a screen of narrow sections could simulate a curved wall by being bent only slightly at each hinge. Upon the surfaces of the screens, the stage light could produce many and fascinating degrees of tone and, of course, any desired colors.[55]

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[53] Ibid., pp. 886-888, 891.

[54] Kenneth Macgowan, op. cit., pp. 127-128.

[55] Ibid., p. 128.

The screens presented many practical difficulties. Craig suggested various materials for them--stone, fresh lumber, metal, and cork--none of which was suitable; finally theatrical unpainted canvas on light wooden frames was used. The manipulation of the screens was unsatisfactory; even after long rehearsals, if one screen leaned and fell, all the others followed it.[56]

Craig had originally planned to have the same screens utilized for other productions; however, since they had been designed especially for "Hamlet," they were not suitable for use with any other play.

In spite of the slight practical value of his screens for stage settings, they have placed Craig among the designers who are not content with the representational stage and who are seeking for more adequate means of solving the problem of stage setting.[57]

Occasionally since Craig's "Hamlet," screens have been employed. "Norman Bel Geddes once showed that a few convertible screens were sufficient for a revival of 'The School for Scandal.'"[58] When Gordon Craig designed the settings for "Macbeth," for one scene, the interior of Banquo's

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[56] Lee Simonson, The Stage is Set (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1932), pp. 322-323.

[57] Kenneth Macgowan, op. cit., pp. 128-129.

[58] Lee Simonson, op. cit., p. 122.

castle, he returned to his formula of screens.[59] In the Japanese tragedy, "The Faithful," there are two scenes: for one, the front part of the stage is left without decoration but with a set or backdrop at the rear representing a wintry and severe Japanese landscape; for the other, a very beautiful room in a Japanese palace has just a few flowers and a picture or two. In The New York Theater Guild's production of the play in 1919-20, Lee Simonson improved upon the beauty of the design and color by using for the backset of the first scene actual screens which were folded out of sight during the palace scene.[60] In 1926 at Copenhagen, for a production of "The Pretenders" Gordon Craig reverted a variation of the screens he had formerly used at Moscow.[61]

Permanent settings--"an equipment of screens, curtains, steps, arches, and flats that can be arranged in various combinations in several plays"--[62] have been employed often abroad. Mr. Macgowan states that in 1921 the only permanent setting in America was an outgrowth of Craig's experiments with his screens. One of his pupils, Sam Hume, while he was director of the Arts and Crafts Theatre in Detroit

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[59] Ibid., p. 336.

[60] Kenneth Macgowan, op. cit., pp. 131-132.

[61] Lee Simonson, op. cit., p. 334.

[62] Joseph Richard Taylor, Course in The New Theatre and The New Drama (Boston: Boston University, September 1927--January 1928), Lecture.

from 1916 to 1918, used a mechanism of pilons and draperies, steps, and occasional flats and arches with great success. During the first year, of nineteen plays calling for twenty scenes, eleven were made from the permanent setting.[63]

> 'The range covered such widely differing requirements,' says Cheney, 'as the interior of a mediaeval chateau for "The Intruder," the Gates of Thalanna for "The Tents of the Arabs," the wall of heaven for "The Glittering Gate," and a Spartan palace for "Helena's Husband."'[64]

The skeleton setting, sometimes called a unit setting, differs from the permanent setting "in that it is a setting, designed for a particular play and is not intended to be used in any other play."[65] Throughout the entire play there is the same general structure or skeleton with changes in minor parts to suit the atmosphere of different scenes. Sometimes it is a practical solution to the problem of staging a play.[66] In

> 'The Cloister,' as staged by Sheldon K. Vielé for the New York Theatre Guild, a row of Gothic arches stood through the whole play. With a background of monastery wall, it served for the first act . . . . For the chapter house, a different backdrop was added, as well

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[63] Kenneth Macgowan, op. cit., p. 129.

[64] Ibid., p. 129.

[65] Joseph Richard Taylor, op. cit., Lecture.

[66] Kenneth Macgowan, op. cit., p. 129.

> as a chair and benches; for the chapel, an altar, a grating and benches[67]

made a new scene. Joseph Urban used a skeleton setting in two acts of "The Love of Three Kings" at the Boston Opera House in 1913-14. Claude Bragdon designed an ingenious setting of this sort for Walter Hampden's "Hamlet" in 1919. Robert Bergman adapted from Gemier this type of setting for "Spanish Love" in 1920-21.[68] Winthrop Ames used a skeleton setting for "The Merchant of Venice" in which he presented George Arliss as Shylock. Lee Simonson's use of the unit setting in some plays has already been mentioned.[69]

It is not only in the kinds of settings, but also in the methods of changing the settings that efforts have been made to increase the power of scenery in a play.

The revolving stage is really not an innovation in scene-shifting. It was invented "by the Japanese and in use in their 'popular theatre' by 1760."[70] It was known as early as 1880 in one of the French theatres. Karl Lautenschlager perfected it and introduced it first in 1896 at the Residenz Theatre in Munich. It was used first in America by Harry Bishop at the Liberty Theatre, Oakland, California.

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[67] Ibid., pp. 44-46.

[68] Ibid., p. 131.

[69] Cf. ante, p. 69, footnote 38.

[70] Lee Simonson, op. cit., p. 9.

Winthrop Ames had a revolving stage built in the New Theatre in 1909 and later in the Little Theatre.[71] It was also installed in the Century and the Booth Theatres. Its use has not been extensive in this country because it needs scenery built especially for it; many plays produced in America go on tour and so require scenery easily adaptable to a variety of stages. The most famous of the theatres using the revolving stage is the Grosses Schauspielhaus in Berlin, planned by Reinhardt.[72]

This type of stage is a great circle, practically filling the stage surface and extending beyond the proscenium. It must be pivoted or supported so as to turn freely. It usually rests upon a shaft sunk into a concrete foundation extending sometimes fifty feet below the level of the stage. At the Century Theatre, New York, it rests upon a circular track beneath the outer edge. One advantage of this type of stage is that heavy pieces of property can be moved easily on it from one part of the stage to another. Its chief use is to expedite the changing of scenes, as five or more complete scenes may be set on it at one time, and the scenes then presented to the audience with no more work than the pressing of an electric button.

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[71] Kenneth Macgowan, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

[72] Joseph Richard Taylor, *op. cit.*, Lecture.

There are disadvantages to this type of stage. One has already been mentioned, that special scenery may be required for it. Also, if more than two scenes are to be used in a play, it might not be possible for two large scenes to be used in immediate succession. In general it is most satisfactory in a large city theatre which brings out only a few plays each season and carries them through long runs.

The wagon stage is the simplest, most important, and the most practical of all the modern German stage devices. The ease with which this can be used and the effects which can be produced at very little cost bring it within the range of any theatre for any play.[73]

> It is a low platform measuring about twelve feet long by six feet wide, mounted on noiseless rubber-tired wheels. The scenery is arranged on both sides and hangs so low that it is just above the stage floor, thereby concealing the wheels. If a bit of scenery is too large to be attached to one of those wagons, two or more wagons may be clamped together.[74]

It is similar to the baggage trucks used on the platforms of American railway stations except that the floor of the truck is only a few inches from the ground, and only a small part of the rim of each wheel is visible. Since scenery can be placed on both sides of the platform, it is necessary on-

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[73] *Ibid.*, Lecture.

[74] *Ibid.*, Lecture.

ly to lower the curtain, turn the wagon or wagons around, and a new scene is ready for the audience.[75]

> Thus Shakespeare's 'Julius Caesar' was brought out in Germany with but three of these wagons plus some curtains for the tent scene and a few simple properties for the battle scene. Granville Barker, during his New York engagement at Wallack's Theatre in 1914-15, introduced a slight modification of the wagon stage. He used three wagons merely for the heavier balance of the scene. In Germany, however, the entire stage setting is frequently brought out by means of these wagons. . . .
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> The cost of each wagon is about $50 and with an outfit of not over a dozen such wagons a producer can mount . . . . the most elaborate play and make the changes of scene with almost startling speed.[76]

The sliding stage is also of German origin. Some people claim that it was invented by Brahm, head mechanical inspector at the Royal Theatre in Berlin; others say that Fritz Brandt of the Royal Opera, Berlin, was its inventor. It is a platform extending from the front to the back of the stage proper and is twice the width of the proscenium arch. While the audience is viewing the stage before them, the part of the platform equal in size to that which they can see is being set in the wings for the next scene. This stage makes possible a rapid change of scene; also large and elaborate scenes can appear in quick succession, if necessary. Any type of scenery can be used on this stage. However, the initial expense is heavy, and a large amount of space is

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[75] Ibid., Lecture.

[76] Ibid., Lecture.

needed on each side of the stage for moving it, and behind it for extra scenery and properties. The large outlay of money which this stage requires has kept it from coming into common use.[77]

The sinking stage is a modification of the sliding stage. Sometimes if a theatre cannot use the room at the sides of the stage for the extra stages of the sliding stage, room is available in the basement. Adolf Linnebach, the technical director of the Königliches Schauspielhaus of Dresden, used hydraulic jacks to raise and lower the floor of the stage upon which the platforms rested. When the stage reached the basement, it was slid off to one side and another stage already set was moved in and raised to the regular level.[78]

The swinging stage was an American invention, first used in "On Trial," in 1914. In the play a number of witnesses at a murder trial give their testimony. As each witness testifies, the scene should change to the place about which the witness is testifying. To make the rapid changes Joseph Wiches, a scenic artist, and Arthur Hopkins, a pro-

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[77] Ibid., Lecture, and Kenneth Macgowan, op. cit., p. 35.

[78] Joseph Richard Taylor, op. cit., Lecture, and Kenneth Macgowan, op. cit., p. 35.

ducer, devised the swinging stage. For "On Trial" it filled the whole normal proscenium opening.[79]

> The principle is simple, and the device does not interfere with touring, since the two platforms needed may be packed and carried about. These platforms are a little larger than the sets to be used. The left front corner of one is pivoted behind the left base of the proscenium arch; the right front corner of the other behind the right base. While one of these platforms is in place before the curtain, the other is swung into the wings and the scene changed. They move on rollers upon concentric rubber tracks laid on the floor.[80]

In the same year Joseph Urban employed this device in his production of "Twelfth Night"; throughout this play the swinging stage aided changes in rather small settings behind an inner proscenium.[81]

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[79] Joseph Richard Taylor, op. cit., Lecture, and Kenneth Macgowan, op. cit., pp. 31-32.

[80] Kenneth Macgowan, op. cit., p. 32.

[81] Ibid., pp. 31-32.

CHAPTER VI

PHILOSOPHIES OF THE NEW DRAMA

Modern magic has been able to transform not only the stage itself, lighting, and scenery, but also the philosophies which govern the writing and the production of some plays. Various natural forces at work in the world have caused the revolution through which the modern theatre has been passing. From it have developed more or less complete philosophies of a new drama and attempts which have met with varying degrees of success to translate these theories into dramatic action.[1] The playwright has felt free to employ whatever technique he thought best suited to his theme.[2] Some producers and designers have made the stage setting reveal hitherto undreamed-of possibilities for symbolic or actual representation of the new principles which govern modern life.[3]

The application of these new techniques to play production has brought the audiences, for a time, at least,

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[1] Kenneth Macgowan, The Theatre of Tomorrow (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1921), p. 249.

[2] Montrose J. Moses, editor, Dramas of Modernism and Their Forerunners (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1936), p. xiii.

[3] Joseph Richard Taylor, Course in The New Theatre and The New Drama (Boston: Boston University, September 1927-January 1928), Lecture.

much nearer the life of the play than they were "when the picture-frame stage and the unresponsive footlights gave them something to look at rather than something to experience."[4] In many cases realism has been abandoned. In other cases, some of its values have been directed toward entirely different interpretations from those formerly used. The attempt to get back of realism to reality--to explore the unconscious mind, "to show the panorama of the soul experience"[5]--has caused two schools of thought to emerge, expressionism and monodrama. Constructivism has sought symbolic meanings in engineering devices. To show the beauty of machinery and its power in our present day life has been the purpose of machine drama.

Expressionism is a form of drama in which the words and actions of the play and the stage setting try to make visible a mental condition more real to the writer and the actors than the physical world in which we live. It has been defined as "an X-ray of the minds of the characters."[6]

The characters are not represented as talking and acting as they would in real life; they attempt to give utterance to their semiconscious or wholly unconscious thoughts

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[4] Montrose J. Moses, op. cit., p. xiii.

[5] Ibid., p. viii.

[6] Joseph Richard Taylor, op. cit., Lecture.

and moods. Plausibility of situation and language is subordinated to the purpose of making clear the meaning of life.

The physical means of representing the emotion may be entirely independent of the cause of the emotion. In fact, the object which caused the emotion is usually in no way related to the natural object or abstract shape by which the author plans to express the sensation he wishes to portray. Absolutely distorted and grotesque forms may reveal a strange or morbid mental condition.[7]

> Thus if the actor is depicting an intoxicated man, the street and houses in the stage setting will seem double and every individual that he meets will take on a dual personality. If the character depicted is insane, the stage houses will seem all twisted and tottering. If a man is a murderer and is haunted by memories of his crime, the stage setting may be made up of hideous leering masks. . . . . There is no sentiment in a door or wall as such. Yet, if the door leads to some chamber in which lies the body of a murderer's victim, the expressionist will contrive to represent the door in such form that it will become visibly the entrance to a chamber of horrors.[8]

Since the setting can express an emotion which has been in the mind of the actor or playwright, the actor becomes of less importance than in plays not expressionistic.

The first consistent attempt to introduce expressionism on the stage was at Moscow at the Kamerny Theatre in

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[7] *Ibid.*, Lecture.

[8] *Ibid.*, Lecture.

1914. Expressionism was limited to the scenery--the drops, the wings, and the walls--which were painted in the form of distorted planes and masses.[9] "Gradually the method developed until an attempt was made to apply expressionism to solid objects on the stage."[10]

The first expressionist production ever given in a public playhouse in America took place in December 1915 under the auspices of the Philadelphia Stage Society, in the Little Theatre. The scene of the drama "Three Women" by Richard J. Beamish was laid in Spain; a bizarre interpretation of Seville was created by spreading on a flat backdrop "angular piles of red, browns, and yellows, with a bit of blue sky shattered by a leaping arch of Moorish shape."[11] The second attempt to be made in America was also in Philadelphia. The annual Artists' Masque produced by the Academy students used backgrounds of an expressionistic nature, designed by Lyman Sayen.

The Russian Ballets of Serge Diaghileff have often utilized the principles of expressionism. The most striking feature of their production has been Piacasso's designs for the costumes and figures of "Parade" in which some of the

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[9] Ibid., Lecture.

[10] Ibid., Lecture.

[11] Kenneth Macgowan, op. cit., p. 117.

characters are represented by strange towering arrangements of cylinders, pipes, and machine-like appendages.

Expressionistic settings have been directed with great success by Harald Andrée at the Royal Opera in Stockholm, Sweden.

In Berlin a group of artists known as Der Sturm introduced expressionism during the summer of 1920 through plays written especially for expressionistic production. Kokoschka and Hasenclever were two of the authors. Expressionism has come to be an outstanding feature of the German stage.[12]

Two of the German expressionistic plays have found their way to this country in the form of motion pictures: "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" and "The Golem." In "Caligari" scenery reinforces the mystery of this story of a madhouse: the houses in the painted flats seem to topple into the street. Expressionism is applied to three dimensions in "The Golem:" in order to convey a sense of decrepitude, plastic forms, as houses, are bent and distorted so as to convey strange emotions.

In the attempt of expressionistic drama to represent inner truth as more important than actuality there are many deviations from normal conditions. Violent action is shown

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[12] Ibid., pp. 117-119.

at the earliest possible moment. Emotional crises occur with much greater frequency than in ordinary life. As the chief use of words is to produce an immediate emotional effect, swift and abrupt words and speeches are often piled one upon another. In most of the plays the rules of traditional dramatic composition, such as preparation, exposition, major climax in the third act, have been abandoned; short scenes are used instead. In some plays as a means of securing speed and high-pitched emotion there is a steady undertone of some regular recurrent sound: it may be the whirr of machinery or the buzzing tones of crowds of men; in "The Emperor Jones," it is the constant beating of the tom-tom by the pursuers; in "The Hairy Ape" it is the throb of the engines; in one play it is the constant pounding of the sea.

When expressionism occasionally reverts to the technique of the realistic theatre, it is not to achieve illusion but to enrich the spiritual content of life. "The Son" by Hasenclever employs the old five-act form of the Elizabethan age, an occasional use of rhymed verse, and a self-conscious use of the soliloquy.

Individual psychology is usually sacrificed to type psychology.[13] In "The Adding Machine" one of the characters is Mr. Zero; many of the characters are types, as the boss,

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[13] Joseph Richard Taylor, *op. cit.*, Lecture.

Mr. One, Mrs. One, Mr. Two, Mrs. Two, a Policeman.[14] In "The Dream Play" nearly all the characters are types, as the Officer, the Billposter, the Lawyer, the Poet.[15]

The conscious analysis of character that sometimes attempts to arrive at interpretation by the creation of "a number of scenes which are psychopathic footnotes, certain minute probings of inner depths,"[16] has found expression in many plays, treating a variety of subjects. A few will be discussed.

"From Morn to Midnight" by Georg Kaiser

> tells in seven scenes the adventures of a man who begins the morning as a bank clerk, steals a fortune because his senses are swept for a moment by a woman whom he imagines to be an adventuress, lives out a number of modern methods of dissipation when he finds she wants nothing to do with him, and ends a suicide in a Salvation Army hall.[17]

The stacatto statements occur almost constantly. The play is filled with terror and humor. The change of the tree to a skeleton, as the clerk is crossing the field of snow in his flight with the money, was mentioned in connec-

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[14] Montrose J. Moses, editor, Representative American Dramas National and Local (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1926), p. 582.

[15] E. Bradlee Watson and Benfield Pressey, editors, Contemporary Dramas European Plays III (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1933), pp. 95, 100, 110, 128.

[16] Montrose J. Moses, editor, *op. cit.*, p. 576.

[17] Kenneth Macgowan, *op. cit.*, pp. 256-257.

tion with lighting.[18] In the play, which is filled with a very intense sense of the deep emotional background against which life passes, the author has succeeded in penetrating beneath the surface of reality.[19]

"The Dream Play" by August Strindberg shows that the old surfaces of life are broken as in a dream. Personalities become symbolic rather than individual. The author

> has sought to imitate the disconnected, but apparently logical form of the dream. Anything may happen; everything is possible and probable. Time and space do not exist; on an insignificant background of reality imagination spins threads and weaves new patterns; a mixture of memories, experiences, free fancies, absurdities, and improvisations.[20]

No matter what phase is shown of a character's personality, one consciousness controls them all--that of the dreamer.

The Daughter of Indra wishes to visit the earth. It takes her a long time to learn what are the conditions of men and their attitudes toward their lot. After she has heard some quarreling, she thinks that love will overcome everything, but later she is disheartened by poverty. She sees many things, including the billposter happy with his dipnet and green cauf, the officer always watching for his Victoria whom he finally sees but does not possess, the fu-

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[18] Cf. ante, p. 53, footnote 57.

[19] Kenneth Macgowan, op. cit., pp. 257, 261.

[20] E. Bradlee Watson and Benfield Pressey, editors, op. cit., pp. 87-88.

tility of the lawyer's work, the inability of different types of workers to escape from the inconveniences of their occupations, the disputes by representatives of various professions. Each person thinks his solution for the problems of life is the best. When the Daughter, weary of existence, decides to leave the earth and return to the ether, she burns her shoes; several characters leave valued possessions with her.[21]

The play has a prologue. There are no formal divisions into acts and scenes, but a curtain is indicated five times before the end. The sidescenes remain unchanged throughout the play, but the background is changed eighteen times.[22]

In "The Adding Machine," the problems of Mr. Zero are the basis of the play. A nagging wife, life in a crowded, cheap tenement, the invention of the adding machine which causes him to lose his position after twenty-five years of service--all lead to his killing the boss. In the scenes in the graveyard and "a pleasant place," he appears to continue his existence rather normally, meeting other dead people who share their experiences with him. Finally he is happy in the operation of an adding machine, until he learns that he must

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[21] Ibid., pp. 88, 91-169.

[22] Ibid., pp. 91-170.

go back to earth as a baby to get ready for his job of running an elaborate adding machine in a coal mine. Because of his despair, he is told to look for Hope, which he does.[23]

Some outstanding features of the play are the following: the first of the seven scenes consists almost entirely of an extremely long speech by Mrs. Zero. Throughout the play there are other very long speeches. At the end of the second scene as an accompaniment to the murder,

> the music swells and swells. To it is added every off-stage effect of the theatre: the wind, the waves, the galloping horses, the locomotive whistle, the sleigh bells, the automobile siren, the glass-crash. New Year's Eve, Election Night, Armistice Day, and the Mardi-Gras. The noise is deafening, maddening, unendurable. Suddenly it culminates in a terrific peal of thunder. For an instant there is a flash of red and then everything is plunged into darkness.

The states of minds of the dead people in the graveyard and "a pleasant place" are vividly portrayed.[24]

In "The Hairy Ape" by Eugene O'Neill the theme is the baulked ambitions of a stoker. He is always trying to "tink": as he goes about his work on the ship during which there is a visit from one of the passengers, after the ship lands in New York and he watches the prosperous people on the streets of the city, when he is in a cell, when he tries to join a labor organization, and finally when he goes to a

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[23] Montrose J. Moses, editor, op. cit., pp. 583-607.

[24] Ibid., pp. 583, 588-589, 591-593, 594-603.

zoo. Here he opens one of the cages and is killed by a gorilla.[25]

The thoughts of a fugitive trying to escape from his pursuers is the theme of "The Emperor Jones." The scenery in the eight scenes of the play interprets Jones' feelings. He is a former Pullman porter who fled to an island in the West Indies after committing murder. There he gained control over the natives and white people on the island, and established himself as Emperor. Finally they all turn against him and plot his death. At first he is calm, but decides to escape through the forest. When he cannot find the white stone under which he had food buried, he is afraid. Formless fears creep out of the forest toward him. At first he is terrified but finally shoots them, and they disappear. As he hears the continuous beat of the tom-tom and loses his way in the forest, he becomes more and more terrified. Different scenes appear to him in which he sees the people he has killed. He finally dispels each haunt with a silver bullet. Just before the end, he tries to escape the witch-doctor, only to be confronted by a crocodile. His terror almost overcomes him, but he succeeds in firing

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[25] Eugene O'Neill, The Hairy Ape Anna Christie The First Man (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1922), pp. 1-89.

his last bullet. As he lies on the ground, overcome by fear, his enemies come upon him and kill him.[26]

Robert Edmond Jones' production of "Richard III" as directed by Arthur Hopkins for John Barrymore in 1919-20 contained elements of expressionism. At the back of the stage and circling into the wings was a part of the Tower of London in which the murders of Richard centered. Although the settings in front of the Tower were changed in different scenes, all through the play the Tower was supposed to represent the ominous presence of Richard.[27]

The principles of expressionism were applied once to "Macbeth," in the spring of 1921, but Mr. Macgowan feels that the production did not achieve its fullest success. Arthur Hopkins was the director; Robert Edmond Jones, the designer for the settings. In Mr. Jones' attempt to create an abstract background expressing the abnormal influences of the witches, he used gigantic masks appearing high in the air above the blasted heath. Throughout the rest of the play very simple and abstract forms carried the mood of the influence of the masked forces upon the action of the play.[28]

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[26] Thomas H. Dickinson, editor, Chief Contemporary Dramatists Third Series (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1930), pp. 5-20.

[27] Kenneth Macgowan, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-133.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

> For most of the scenes in Inverness, Jones used one or two sets of arches, curiously and disturbingly aslant. . . . . When Macbeth reached the highest point of his success the two groups seemed to lunge forward and away toward triumph. In the last scenes, when he heard of the coming of Birnam wood, only one set of arches remained and it seemed almost toppling to the ground.[29]

The throne of the banquet scene was backed by brooding and malignant shapes. There was a similar treatment for other abstract shapes.

> The characteristic form employed was the distorted Gothic arch. Repeated in shields, conical helmets and spears it was like the dull point of a murderous dagger. Twisted as it was, it impressed upon the mind the deadly and thwarted ambition with which the sisters obsess Macbeth. Here was scenery attempting to suggest an emotional idea, instead of a physical reality.[30]

Constructivism is another of the new philosophies of modern stage presentation employed by machine-drama. It is skeleton-engineering applied to stage setting.[31] Its advocates wished to be not only the engineers of the new type of setting but also the thinkers who expressed the philosophic interpretations of the plays.[32] As a result, constructivism became another means of interpreting life.

The frame through which we see any play is not the proscenium frame of a theatre but the frame of our minds.

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[29] Ibid., p. 124.

[30] Ibid., p. 125.

[31] Joseph Richard Taylor, op. cit., Lecture.

[32] S. Margolin, "The artist and the theatre," The Theatre in the USSR, VI (Bi-monthly Illustrated Periodical, 1934), 46.

Since the dramatic conflict of any play must be patterned according to the forces of society and nature which shape the destiny of men, our belief in the nature of reality will be responsible for the method by which a play will reflect a picture of life. The new conception of the structure of the universe, originating in the more recent speculations of physics and chemistry, reveals vast space and intense activity in a minute molecule. The universe is apparently limitless; human nature, also, subjected to the analysis and probings of modern psychology, reveals new aspects for dramatic interpretation. To give symbolic representations of some of the moments in the theatre and so to disclose certain of the social aspects of the play came to be the purpose of the constructivists.[33]

Constructivism is opposed to decoration and pictorial effects on the stage; instead it employs engineering, mechanics, planes, and volumes as materials. It does away with backdrops and flats, and if possible, with the old proscenium. It uses, among other things, wide arches and many levels to indicate changes in condition or character and to accentuate the culminating points of the performance.[34]

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[33] Lee Simonson, The Stage is Set (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1932), pp. 63-64.

[34] Joseph Richard Taylor, *op*. *cit*., Lecture.

Constructivist settings began to be used by workers' organizations in Russia after the Revolution in 1917.[35] The hatred for stage decoration was provoked by the nonchalance of the festival stage canvasses turned out by the _World of Art_ group.[36] Bare rostrums, stairs, ladders, skeleton windows and doors, etc. originally set among curtains masking the back and the side walls of the stage were at first

> purely functional, and resulted from the impossibility of obtaining materials for scenery at that time and from the aim of advanced Russian producers even before the Revolution to emphasize conventionality and from the dislike of the working classes for luxurious decorations and the antiquated styles of the old burgeois productions. Later the curtains were discarded, leaving the whole of the apparatus visible during the performance, though sometimes front drops or tabs between the acts were used. When the intellectual scenic painters and artists, mostly Cubists, took a fancy to these naked and purely utilitarian structures, they turned them into machine-like compositions, adding elements of metal and glass. . . .

By the time Meyerhold began to use constructivist settings in 1920, they were a customary thing in Russia.[37]

After some time the constructivists began to relinquish the abstract and purely spectacular principle in the

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[35] Theodore Komisarjevsky and Lee Simonson, _Settings and Costumes of the Modern Stage_ (New York: The Studio Publications Inc., 1933), p. 14.

[36] S. Margolin, _op. cit._, p. 46.

[37] Theodore Komisarjevsky and Lee Simonson, _op. cit._, pp. 14-15.

designing of the stage and to have the sets exhibit evidences of real life.[38]

> The constructivists excelled in the art of transformation. Each wall contained in itself a multitude of contrivances. Its separate parts were detachable, and could be raised and lowered, disclosing unexpected secrets. A wardrobe could be miraculously transformed into a stove or a couch. In the long run however these dynamics wearied the spectator and created an impression of something static. The construction, for all the efforts of the builders to give them variety, were decidedly monotonous as to form. The spectator got tired of the grey uniformity and naturally longed for a display of varied colors.[39]

The new spectator in the Soviet theatre demands a setting which discloses a more vivid portrayal of the substance of the play and its epoch than constructivism can give. Meyerhold himself became disappointed by its limitations and turned to inventing compositions and forms of definite design.[40]

Three of the leaders of the movement are Rabinovitch who introduced the movement to America in his production of the "Lysistrata" of Aristophanes with its skeleton Acropolis; Tavioff who employed geometrical forms and different levels; and Meyerhold, who built his stage settings of iron, concrete, and glass in geometric forms.[41]

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[38] S. Margolin, op. cit., p. 46.

[39] Ibid., pp. 44-45.

[40] Ibid., p. 45.

[41] Lee Simonson, op. cit., p. 93 and Joseph Richard Taylor, op. cit., Lecture.

A few examples will indicate the use of constructivism. Alexander Exter designed for a Spanish ballet a wooden structure with steps and various levels. The movements of the dancers and the musicians were to be modeled after the sharp angles of the structure. Meyerhold used for his production of "Les" platforms on a bare stage showing its bleak brick walls.[42] In Norman Bel Geddes' "Hamlet" there were evidences of constructivism. The structures at the sides and back of the stage were of different levels. The same area near the front of the stage was used for a number of different places: a room in the palace with the King's and Queen's chairs thereon, the Queen's bed, the grave of Ophelia. The play "The Mothers" was "rescripted"--reshaped to a pattern which will reveal the mechanisms of the emotions and situations--for a constructivist presentation by three members of the 1937 group of the Playshop Laboratory at Mount Holyoke College.[43]

In Russia although theatres of provincial towns and even the capitals of national republics still show traces and give echoes of constructivist tendencies, especially in productions of Meyerhold as Ostrovsky's "Lucrative Place" or "Forest" produced now according to constructivism in its

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[42] Joseph Richard Taylor, op. cit., Lecture.

[43] Theatre Arts Monthly, XXI (July, 1937), 552.

supremacy, constructivism has lost much of its vitality. After playing a very important role in the history of the Soviet theatre, it has almost ceased to exist as an independent style.[44]

Machine drama is a type of drama which purposes to interpret the effect of machinery on human life. The way in which machinery has caused suffering by human hands has been shown in several plays. On the other hand, the many ways machinery aids our daily existence have led some artists to think that it expresses the true spirit of the present age. The Futurists go even further; they wish to create in people the desire to become machines. In Russia, machine drama educates the common people to realize that in the economic life of the country they, and not the machines, are now the controlling force.

Whatever other scenery--in many cases, very simple--is used in the play, an actual machine which can be put into operation is an essential part of the stage setting.

Dramas interpreting the opposition to machinery are Hauptmann's "The Weavers," Kaiser's "Gas," Toller's "The Machine-Wreckers," and Capek's "R. U. R." "The Weavers" dramatizes a strike of starving weavers who have been deprived of their means of livelihood by the loom. They fi-

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[44] S. Margolin, op. cit., pp. 43, 45-46.

nally destroy the capitalistic machine which is starving them and grinding them into dust. Machinery as an inhuman monster which has attacked and destroyed man, the inventor of the machine, is the terrible picture shown in "Gas." "The Machine-Wreckers" is similar in theme to "The Weavers;" in this play the workers in a factory wreck the large machine which has deprived so many of them of their means of livelihood. Capek's "R. U. R." shows that men in their search for leisure and freedom from exhausting manual toil have invented machines which are capable of performing all the physical labor of the world; finally these machine-men realize their power and destroy their human creators.

The Futurists in Italy, led by Marinetti, find extreme beauty of form, color, and motion in machinery. They do not admit that man has been subordinated to machinery; instead they think that man has recognized the excellent qualities of a machine, and if he will only wish to, he can make himself become like a machine. Several Futurist plays and ballets have appeared. In one Futurist ballet, the dancers were enclosed in cylinders, funnels, etc., representing parts of a locomotive.

The Russian machine drama is used for economic propaganda. The Russians attribute to machinery all their own social and moral qualities: vitality, strength, clearness, steel nerves, persistency, precision, rhythm, style, endur-

ance; and the Russian theatrical producers teach their workmen actors to act and dance by imitating the movements of a machine. Whereas in the old days the Russians were mere machines doing routine work in the factories, now the situation is reversed: the workers are the masters of the machine. Machinery may be a blessing if it is used for social service; it is an evil if it employed for gain.

The Russian producers try to arouse in the audience an active sympathy with the thought and purpose of the play. Sometimes they use upon the stage objects and sounds peculiar to a factory. The scenery may be composed of scaffolding and mechanical appliances. A single reaping machine was the only scenery for one play. A jazz orchestra consisted of a motor horn, a typewriter, and clashing pieces of metal. In a machine dance, the movements of a machine were applied to the actors.

While the advocates of machine drama feel that it has great value, one critic thinks that it will never displace other forms of drama. Most people would not choose to witness machinery for pleasure; they desire beauty, nobility, and dignity in some other form.[45]

Monodrama, the type of drama in which different phases of one person's character become the actors, first took form

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[45] Joseph Richard Taylor, op. cit., Lecture.

in the mind of Nikolai Nikolayevich Yevreinov.[46] He read "An Introduction to Monodrama" before the Literary and Artistic Circle in Moscow, December 29, 1908; in Petrograd in the Theatre Club, March 6, 1909; and in the theatre of Vera Kommissarzhevskaya, March 17, 1909. It was published in Petrograd in 1909 by Mme. Butkovskaya. His first play of monodrama was "The Representation of Love" produced in Petrograd in 1910. In 1912, "The Theatre of the Soul," another play embodying his new theory, was presented on the stage of the Crooked Looking-Glass.

The development of the theory continued, and in 1913 Mme. Butkovskaya published for Yevreinov his "Teatr kak Takovoi" ("The Theatre as Such"), with illustrations drawn by Kulbin. In 1914 there appeared the second volume of his collected plays, the more important ones which he had gathered since the publication of the first volume in 1907.

The full and complete development of his theory as well as his critical opinion of all other forms of the theatre and their apologists is contained in the three volumes of his greatest work in dialect, "Teatr dlya Syebya" ("The Theatre for One's Self"), "the first of which was published

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[46] Oliver Sayler, The Russian Theatre (New York: Brentano's, 1922), p. 226 and Thomas H. Dickinson, editor, Chief Contemporary Dramatists Third Series (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1930), pp. 517, 519.

by Mme. Butkovskaya in 1915, the second in 1916, and the third after the Revolution in 1917."[47]

Only a small number of Yevreinov's writings have been translated into other languages. So far as Mr. Sayler can discover

> the only published translations of his plays or his dialectics are as follows: 'The Greenroom of the Soul' into English, French and German; 'Gay Death,' the harlequinade, into English and German; 'Such a Woman' into German; and 'An Introduction to Monodrama' into English.[48]

In "An Introduction to Monodrama," Yevreinov states the fundamental purposes and aspects of his revolutionary way of thinking for the theatre:

> 'The cornerstone of monodrama is the "living experience" of the acting character on the stage, resulting in the similiar "living experience" of the spectator, who through this act of "coordinate living experience" becomes one with the acting character. . . .
>
> . . . .
>
> 'The "I" (the acting character) is a bridge from the auditorium to the stage. . . .
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> 'The spectator must know from the programme with whom the author invites him to have a common life, in whose image he himself must appear.'[49]

Mr. Macgowan in The Theatre of Tomorrow says:

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[47] Oliver Sayler, op. cit., pp. 226-228.

[48] Ibid., p. 229.

[49] Ibid., pp. 230-231.

> . . . . the whole play, its action, its setting and all its people, should be seen by the audience through the eyes of one character only, as the hero sees them, and should take on the quality, color, movement and motives which his mind conceives them to possess . . . .[50]

It must penetrate not merely what the hero thinks, but his unconscious mind as well, and represent not what he thinks but what he desires.[51] In "The Theatre of the Soul" the characters are the Professor; M1, The Rational Entity of the Soul; M2, The Emotional Entity; M3, The Subliminal Entity; M1's Concept of the Wife; M2's Concept of the Wife; M1's Concept of the Dancer; M2's Concept of the Dancer; the Porter. The action passes in the soul in the period of half a second.[52]

In 1921 the name of one of the theatres in Moscow, The Dramatic Mono-Theatre, indicated that Yevreinov's theory must have had practical application.[53]

"The Theatre of the Soul" was given in London under the direction of Miss Edith Craig.[54]

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[50] Kenneth Macgowan, _op_. _cit_., p. 250.

[51] _Ibid_., p. 250.

[52] Thomas H. Dickinson, editor, _op_. _cit_., p. 519.

[53] Kenneth Macgowan, _op_. _cit_., p. 250.

[54] "A puzzling Russian," _The Literary Digest_, LIII (October 14, 1916), 952.

The Washington Square Players produced his satirical harlequinade named "The Merry Death."[55]

Yevreinov seems to be the chief exponent of his theory.

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[55] *Ibid.*, 952.

CHAPTER VII

FORM AND CONTENT OF PLAYS

The fact that productions bring intellectual or emotional enjoyment or both to the onlookers is due in some cases and to some extent to the form and the content of the dramas. A study of many plays shows continuation of earlier patterns or experimentation with new forms. A great number of plays show one or more phases of modernism; there has also been a renewed interest in the costume play, perhaps "because the impulse toward the best theatre is essentially an escape from reality."[1]

The mechanical divisions of the plays show a great variety of treatment.

Although recent years claim the one-act play as an important form of the drama, it is not new. Short humorous plays have a long line of ancestors: they can be traced with certainty to the commedia dell'arte;

> from Italy the farce passed to Spain and France, from France to Germany and to England, and thence, finally, to America. Among the one-act plays of the Little Theatre to-day is found the direct descendant of the form.[2]

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[1] Edith J. R. Isaacs, "History repeats itself." _Theatre Arts Monthly_, XIX (July, 1935), 495.

[2] Margaret Gardner Mayorga, editor, _Representative One-Act Plays by American Authors_ (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1920), p. xiii.

Short serious plays, however, occurred very infrequently until the latter part of the nineteenth century; with the twentieth century, almost simultaneously in Germany, England, France, and America, a serious and literary one-act form came into existence.

Various factors contributed to its growth. Whereas humor alone had formerly been the medium for holding the attention of the audience, Ibsen's projection of a dramatic idea showed that a development of thoughts or series of developments could be presented in a short space of time, and in one act as well as in several. The free theatre, with its high ideals and the small number of plays of the Ibsen rank, fostered the one-act play. The short story, with singleness of impression for its purpose, had developed by the end of the nineteenth century; people liked the small unit; the one-act play soon followed. Local conditions in some countries aided it: the two-act play, used rather frequently in England, easily led to the one-act; the National Theatre in Ireland, which had no national playwright at that time to write for it, called forth one-act plays. The humorous plays were influenced by the interest in the serious plays and have been patterned in accordance with the new ideals.[3]

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[3] *Ibid.*, pp. xiv-xvii.

Before it came into general use, the one-act play was presented in vaudeville houses in America and used as a curtain-raiser in London to mark time until the latecomers to the theatre should arrive. The Grand Guignol Theatre of Paris might have for an evening's entertainment several one-act plays of the hair-raising, blood-curdling variety, but in most places programs composed entirely of one-act plays were rare. "Sir James Matthew Barrie is usually credited with being the first in England to write one-act plays to be grouped in a single production."[4]

Although the one-act play has never superseded the longer play, its popularity has been increased greatly by the little theatres. In 1937 the Cornell Summer Theatre presented for one of its programs "Four One-Act Plays."[5] Noel Coward has written a series of one-act plays for the commercial stage: Tonight at 8:30 has three alternating programs, each of three one-act plays. It was presented on Broadway from November 24, 1936-March 9, 1937,[6] and has been shown in several of the summer theatres in the northeastern part of the country this year: Plymouth Playhouse, Milford,

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[4] Helen Louise Cohen, editor, One-Act Plays by Modern Authors (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1921), p. xiii.

[5] The New York Times, July 18, 1937, X, p. 1

[6] "On the boards," Theatre Arts Monthly, XXI (March, 1937), 252 and Ibid., (April, 1937), 336.

Connecticut;[7] Chapel Playhouse, Guilford, Connecticut, and Theatre-by-the-Sea, Matunuck, Rhode Island;[8] Stony Creek, Connecticut, and Berkshire Playhouse, Stockbridge, Massachusetts;[9] and Cape Playhouse, Dennis, Cape Cod.[10]

So many one-act plays have been written that only a few can be mentioned. The earliest of importance was "The Intruder" by Maurice Maeterlinck, published in 1890. In this the characters are types, as the Three Daughters, the Grandfather.[11] "The Pierrot of the Minute" by Ernest Dawson concludes with an epilogue.[12] "Fortune and Men's Eyes," the first of Josephine Preston Peabody's published plays (1900), is written in blank verse.[13] "The Riders to the Sea" by John Millington Synge is classed among the greatest plays in our language.[14] "Spreading the News" by Lady Augusta Gregory was first performed at the Abbey Theatre December 27,

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[7] The New York Times, June 27, 1937, X, p. 1.

[8] Ibid., July 4, 1937, X, p. 1.

[9] Ibid., July 11, 1937, X, p. 1.

[10] Ibid., July 18, 1937, X, p. 1.

[11] Helen Louise Cohen, op. cit., pp. 265, 268.

[12] Ibid., pp. 53, 73-74.

[13] Ibid., p. 287.

[14] Ibid., p. 195.

1904.[15] "Gettysburg" by Percy MacKaye is among the earlier one-act plays published in this country.[16] "Beauty and the Jacobin" by Booth Tarkington "'gives evidence of being the first conscious and determined . . . . effort of the author to leave the surface and work from the inside of his characters out. . . .'"[17] "The Little Man" by John Galsworthy "was produced in New York at Maxine Elliott's Theatre in February, 1917, as a curtain raiser to G. K. Chesterton's play 'Magic.'"[18] Lord Dunsany, "unlike the other playwrights associated with the Irish National Theatre, has borrowed the glamour of the Orient rather than that of the Celtic lore, to heighten his dramatic effects."[19] His "Night at an Inn" was first performed on any stage at the Neighborhood Playhouse in New York, April 22, 1916.[20] "The Maid of France," first given in London on July 16, 1917, is one of the many plays of Harold Brighouse of the Manchester school of dramatists.[21] "The Twelve-Pound Look" and "The Old Lady Shows

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[15] _Ibid._, p. 157.

[16] _Ibid._, p. 98.

[17] _Ibid._, p. 4.

[18] _Ibid._, p. 324.

[19] _Ibid._, p. 211.

[20] _Ibid._, p. 211.

[21] _Ibid._, p. 139.

Her Medals" are two of Sir James Matthew Barrie's excellent one-act plays.[22] "The Theatre of the Soul" by Nikolai Nikolayevich Yevreinov has already been mentioned.[23] "The Twilight Saint" by Stark Young is one result of his study of the native drama of Greece, Spain, and Italy.[24] "The Long Christmas Dinner" is by Thornton Wilder. The scene is laid in the dining room of the Bayard home.[25]

> At the extreme left, by the proscenium pillar, is a strange portal trimmed with garlands of fruits and flowers. Directly opposite is another edged and hung with black velvet. The portals denote birth and death.
>
> Ninety years are to be traversed in this play which represents in accelerated motion ninety Christmas dinners in the Bayard household. The actors are dressed in inconspicuous clothes and must indicate their gradual increase in years through their acting. Most of them carry wigs of white hair which they adjust upon their heads at the indicated moment, simply and without comment. The ladies may have shawls concealed beneath the table that they gradually draw up about their shoulders as they grow older.
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> . . . .
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> There is no curtain. The audience arriving at the theatre sees the stage set and the table laid, though still in partial darkness. Gradually the lights in the auditorium become dim and the stage brightens until

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[22] J. M. Barrie, Representative Plays (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), p. xv.

[23] *Cf*. *ante*, p. 104, footnote 47, and p. 106, footnote 52.

[24] Helen Louise Cohen, *op*. *cit*., p. 226.

[25] Thornton Wilder, The Long Christmas Dinner & Other Plays in One Act (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931), Title page and p. 1.

sparkling winter sunlight streams through the dining room windows.[26]

The number of two-act plays is extremely limited. "Androcles and the Lion" by Bernard Shaw has a long preface on the prospects of Christianity, a prologue, the two acts of the play, and an explanation by the author of his attitude toward the subject.[27]

Some plays are in two parts. Beggar on Horseback by George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly has no scene division indicated.[28] The Green Pastures by Marc Connelly has ten scenes in the first part and eight in the second.[29]

Many plays have three acts. A few of these are as follows: "Craig's Wife" by George Kelly,[30] "Dear Brutus" by J. M. Barrie,[31] "Juno and the Paycock" by Sean O'Casey,[32]

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[26] Ibid., pp. 1-2.

[27] Bernard Shaw, Androcles and the Lion Overruled Pygmalion (New York: Brentano's, 1916), pp. xiii-cxxvii, 1-57.

[28] George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly, Beggar on Horseback (New York: Horace Liveright, 1924), Title page.

[29] Marc Connelly, The Green Pastures (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Incorporated, 1929), p. ix.

[30] Montrose J. Moses, editor, Dramas of Modernism and Their Forerunners (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1936), pp. 553-607.

[31] J. M. Barrie, op. cit., pp. 291-376.

[32] Thomas H. Dickinson, editor, Chief Contemporary Dramatists Third Series (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1930), p. 162.

"Right You Are! (If You Think So)" by Luigi Pirandello,[33] "The Dover Road" by A. A. Milne,[34] "The Love of the Three Kings" by Sem Benelli,[35] "The Truth About Blayds" by A. A. Milne,[36] and "Wings Over Europe" by Robert Nichols and Maurice Brown.[37]

Some of the three-act plays which have scene divisions are the following: High Tor by Maxwell Anderson with three scenes in the first act, in the second, and one scene in the third;[38] Journey's End by R. C. Sherriff with one scene in the first act, two scenes in the second, three in the third;[39] "Loyalties" by John Galsworthy with two scenes in the first act, two in the second, and three in the third;[40] "The Silver Box" by John Galsworthy with three scenes in the first act, two in the second, and one scene in the third;[41]

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[33] Montrose J. Moses, editor, op. cit., pp. 239-275.

[34] Thomas H. Dickinson, editor, op. cit., p. 120.

[35] Ibid., pp. 383-411.

[36] Montrose J. Moses, editor, op. cit., p. 464.

[37] Ibid., pp. 501-547.

[38] Maxwell Anderson, High Tor (Washington, D. C.: Anderson House, 1937), pp. 3-142.

[39] R. C. Sheriff, Journey's End (New York: Brentano's Publishers, 1929), pp. 3-204.

[40] John Galsworthy, Representative Plays (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), p. 388.

[41] Ibid., p. 2.

"The Silver Cord" by Sidney Howard with one scene in the first act, two scenes in the second, and one in the third;[42] and Winterset by Maxwell Anderson with three scenes in the first act, one scene in the second, and one on the third.[43]

"R. U. R." by Karel Capek has three acts and an epilogue.[44]

A number of the four-act plays which have no scenes follow: "He Who Gets Slapped" by Leonid Andreyev,[45] "Hedda Gabler" by Hendrik Ibsen,[46] "Magda" by Hermann Sudermann,[47] "The Admirable Crichton" by J. M. Barrie,[48] "The Cherry Orchard" by Anton Chekhov,[49] "The Dybbuk" by S. Ansky,[50] "The Lower Depths" by Maxim Gorky,[51] "The New York Idea" by Lang-

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[42] Thomas H. Dickinson, editor, op. cit., pp. 65-116.

[43] Maxwell Anderson, Winterset (Washington: Anderson House, 1935), pp. 3-134.

[44] Thomas H. Dickinson, editor, op. cit., p. 571.

[45] Ibid., pp. 473-515.

[46] E. Bradlee Watson and Benfield Pressey, editors, Contemporary Drama European Plays II (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), pp. 1-119.

[47] Ibid., pp. 187-278.

[48] J. M. Barrie, op. cit., pp. 87-185.

[49] Montrose J. Moses, editor, op. cit., pp. 7-36.

[50] Thomas H. Dickinson, editor, op. cit., pp. 605-638.

[51] E. Bradlee Watson and Benfield Pressey, editors, op. cit., III, p. 171.

don Mitchell,[52] "The Sea-Gull" by Anton Chekhov,[53] and "Uncle Vanya" by Anton Chekhov.[54]

Several of the four-act plays with scene divisions within the acts are these: Ah, Wilderness! by Eugene O'Neill with one scene in the first act, one in the second, two scenes in the third, and three in the fourth;[55] Days Without End by Eugene O'Neill which has one scene in the first act, one in the second, two scenes in the third, and two in the fourth;[56] "Justice" by John Galsworthy with one scene in the first act, one in the second, three scenes in the third, and one in the fourth;[57] "Processional" by John Howard Lawson with one scene in the first act and one in the fourth, two scenes in the second act, and three in the third,[58] and "The Piper" by Josephine Preston Peabody with one scene in the

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[52] E. Bradlee Watson and Benfield Pressey, editors, op. cit., I, p. 6.

[53] E. Bradlee Watson and Benfield Pressey, editors, op. cit., III, pp. 1-78.

[54] E. Bradlee Watson and Benfield Pressey, editors, op. cit., II, pp. 451-516.

[55] Eugene O'Neill, Ah, Wilderness! (New York: Random House, 1933), p. 11.

[56] Eugene O'Neill, Days Without End (New York: Random House, 1934), p. 11.

[57] John Galsworthy, op. cit., p. 162.

[58] E. Bradlee Watson and Benfield Pressey, editors, op. cit., I, pp. 181-289.

first act, two scenes in the second, one in the third and one in the fourth.[59]

The plays with five acts are few. "Cyrano de Bergerac" by Edmond Rostand[60] and "Francesca Da Rimini" by Gabrielle d'Annunzio[61] have no scene-divisions within the acts. "Pélléas and Mélisande" by Maurice Maeterlinck has four scenes in the first act, four in the second, five in the third, four in the fourth, and two in the fifth.[62] "The Machine-Wreckers" by Ernst Toller has both a prologue and scene divisions: the first act has one scene; there are two scenes in the second act, three in the third, two in the fourth, and three in the fifth.[63]

The Old Maid dramatized by Zoë Akins from the novel by Edith Wharton has five episodes. When the play was pro-

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[59] Montrose J. Moses, editor, Representative American Dramas National and Local (Boston: Little, Brown,and Company, 1926), p. 246.

[60] E. Bradlee Watson and Benfield Pressey, editors, op. cit., II, pp. 279-449.

[61] E. Bradlee Watson and Benfield Pressey, editors, op. cit., III, pp. 277-476.

[62] E. Bradlee Watson and Benfield Pressey, editors, op. cit., II, pp. 121-186.

[63] Montrose J. Moses, editor, Dramas of Modernism and Their Forerunners (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1936), pp. 167-200.

duced at the Empire Theatre, the intermissions came after the second and third episodes.[64]

Many plays show increase in the number of scenes. "Time is a Dream" by H. R. Lenormand has six scenes.[65] "Adam the Creator" by Karel and Josef Capek has six and an epilogue.[66] Several plays have seven scenes: "From Morn to Midnight" by Georg Kaiser,[67] "In Abraham's Bosom" by Paul Green,[68] "Liliom" by Ferenc Molnar which also has a prologue,[69] and "The Adding Machine" by Elmer L. Rice.[70] "The Emperor Jones" and "The Hairy Ape" by Eugene O'Neill each have eight scenes.[71] "The Dream Doctor" by H. R. Lenormand

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[64] Zoë Akins, The Old Maid (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1935), p. 1.

[65] Thomas H. Dickinson, editor, op. cit., p. 311.

[66] Montrose J. Moses, editor, Dramas of Modernism and Their Forerunners (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1936), p. 283.

[67] Thomas H. Dickinson, editor, op. cit., p. 232.

[68] Ibid., p. 24.

[69] Ibid., p. 529.

[70] Montrose J. Moses, editor, Representative American Dramas National and Local (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1926), p. 582.

[71] Ibid., p. 430 and Eugene O'Neill, The Hairy Ape Anna Christie The First Man (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1922), pp. 1-87.

has a prologue and nine scenes.[72] "Many Mansions" by Eckert Goodman and Jules Eckert Goodman has fifteen scenes.[73] *Elizabeth of England* by Natalie Hays Hammond has forty-five scenes.[74]

Strange Interlude by Eugene O'Neill has two parts with five acts in the first and four in the second.[75]

Mourning Becomes Electra also by Eugene O'Neill, is a trilogy in fourteen scenes.[76]

There are various types of freak plays. "Cyrano de Bergerac" by Edmond Rostand has a play within the play.[77] *Beggar on Horseback* by George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly uses a pantomime as part of the evidence at the trial.[78] Occasionally plays are told backwards. In "On Trial" by El-

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[72] Montrose J. Moses, editor, *Dramas of Modernism and Their Forerunners* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1926), pp. 211-237.

[73] News item, *The Berkshire Evening Eagle*, August 3, 1937.

[74] Natalie Hays Hammond, *Elizabeth of England* (New York: Kamin Publishers, 1936).

[75] Eugene O'Neill, *Strange Interlude* (New York: Horace Liveright, 1928), p. 7.

[76] Burns Mantle, editor, *The Best Plays of 1931-1932* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1932), p. 65.

[77] E. Bradlee Watson and Benfield Pressey, editors, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 288-308.

[78] George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly, *op. cit.*, pp. 202-207.

mer Rice the story begins with the trial of the accused, then shows the crime, the events which preceded the crime, and the cause of the crime inherent in incidents occurring ten or fifteen years earlier.[79] "Caponsacchi," the dramatization of Robert Browning's "The Ring and the Book," also starts with a trial. The succeeding scenes until the last show the events which led up to the death of Pompilia and reveal that the person responsible for her death was her husband, not the priest, Caponsacchi. The final scene is again in the court; its surprise results in the release of Caponsacchi.[80] After the success of "On Trial"

> the same device, intermittent 'flashbacks,' simultaneous action, and many other methods for avoiding the orderly unknotting of a plot in three or four tight-packed and progressive acts, appeared again and again in the plays of Broadway.[81]

Beggar on Horseback includes a dream[82] as well as simultaneous action in some parts of the play.[83] Throughout Strange Interlude Eugene O'Neill uses the double dialogue to indicate the thoughts he feels that the characters would normally ut-

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[79] Kenneth Macgowan, The Theatre of Tomorrow (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1921), p.231.

[80] "Caponsacchi," play starring Walter Hampden.

[81] Kenneth Macgowan, op. cit., p.231.

[82] George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly, op. cit., pp. 97-228.

[83] Ibid., pp. 49, 65-73, 131-132, 186-187.

ter under the circumstances and the subconscious thoughts which parallel the consciously voiced thoughts.[84]

For a number of years radio as a dramatic medium has been discussed. From time to time plays written for the stage, in whole or in part, have been broadcast. Since the chief purpose of the programs is advertisement, the best programs, from the viewpoint of the sponsors, are those that bring the greatest increase in sales. Until recently the public has not demanded plays.[85] Now there are three types of dramatic broadcast: adaptations of plays written for the stage; feature programs which owe nothing to film or stage for either their form or their dialogue: "programs which are essentially 'radiogenic' in that they are inconceivable in terms of any other medium"; and the pure radio play--the play written especially for the microphone.

Mr. Val Gielgud states that "the pure radio play has never found its feet" because the financial rewards have not been great enough to attract continued contributions from writers of the first rank.[86]

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[84] Eugene O'Neill, op. cit., pp. 11-352.

[85] Jerome H. Lapham, "What hope radio drama?" Theatre Arts Monthly, XVIII (January, 1934), 44-47.

[86] Val Gielgud, "Radio play." Theatre Arts Monthly, XXI (February, 1937), 109-110.

Mr. Archibald MacLeish, however, thinks that there is a great field for verse plays written especially for radio.

His The Fall of the City, apparently the first verse play in this country written especially for radio, was broadcast Sunday evening, April 11, 1937, from 7 to 7:30 Eastern Standard Time, over the Columbia Broadcasting System Network.

> The British Broadcasting Corporation has presented a few verse plays written expressly for radio and one of them, Geoffrey Bridson's 'March of the '45,' is said to have been both interesting and exciting.[87]

Mr. MacLeish thinks that radio is an especially good means of presenting verse plays.

Poets have always claimed to use the spoken word with a special authority and to possess peculiar rights to play upon the word-excited imagination. "The more packed and allusive the word, the more illuminating its rhythms, the more perfectly is the scene prepared, the more convincingly is the play enacted."[88] When the distractions which meet the eye are not present, the verse has power over the ear which "accepts, accepts and believes, accepts and creates."[89]

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[87] Archibald MacLeish, The Fall of the City (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1937), pp. vii, ix.

[88] Ibid., pp. ix-x.

[89] Ibid., p. x.

Since the ear is the poet's true audience, it is the radio which can give him access to this friend.

Radio has a tool perfectly adapted to the use of the poet in the Announcer. The idea of utilizing a commentator or commentators is not new for the stage[90]--rather recently two were used in "Lucrece"--but the problems have been how to justify the device and how to manage the exits and entrances. Since the Announcer is part of radio technique, Mr. MacLeish believes that poetic drama written especially for the radio can thrive.[91]

The comparatively low cost of producing a verse play for radio, with some of the most competent readers of verse available from time to time in the broadcasting studios, and music and other incidental sounds easily arranged, assures a hearing to the man interested in carrying modern poetry to the stage even though a Broadway producer may be reluctant to experiment with a verse play.

The audience reached by radio, in time and with adequate materials, may become an audience vigorous enough to demand the strongest work of the poet.[92]

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[90] Ibid., p. xi.

[91] Ibid., p. xi.

[92] Ibid., pp. xi-xii.

The series of dramas written especially for the radio, which was inaugurated with "The Fall of the City," has been continued with plays by Irwin Shaw, Sherwood Anderson, and others.

> The fact that radio is an ephemeral medium which discards its material after one brief performance has heretofore reacted against the advance of radio drama as an art form. But this series of plays by leading dramatists--which may be expected to be good enough to stand repetition and, in some cases at least, will achieve the permanence of book covers--augurs well for the future of radio drama.[93]

Although many of the plays produced in recent times, of which a number have already been mentioned in various connections, reveal some principle or principles of modernism already listed, there has also been a decided vogue for costume plays, as one source only, the pictorial evidence in the Theatre Arts Monthly during portions of the last six years, indicates.

A variety of plays appeared in a variety of places in the latter part of 1931. "The Merchant of Venice" produced at the Stavoske Theatre in Prague had a simple unit set with curtains and banners in contrast with more solid stage materials.[94] The Cleveland Playhouse produced Sophocles' "Antigone;"[95] The Cambridge (England) Festival Theatre,

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[93] Theatre Arts Monthly, XXI (July, 1937), 500.

[94] Theatre Arts Monthly, XV (September, 1931), 763.

[95] Ibid. (October, 1931), 824.

"Antigone" and "Hassan" and "Henry VIII."[96] "Elizabeth of England" adapted by Ashley Dukes from Ferdinand Bruckner's chronicle play was produced in London. Maude Adams returned to the stage in "The Merchant of Venice."[97]

Many costume plays were presented in 1932. The Theatre Arts Monthly for January states:

> The number of Shakespearean revivals is steadily increasing throughout the world. At Monachoff's Great State Theatre in Moscow a gaily festive setting was provided for 'The Merry Wives of Windsor.'[98]

In "Julius Caesar" at the Teatr Polski in Warsaw brilliant effects were secured through rhythmic handling of crowds. "Coriolanus" at the National Theatre in Sofia depended on skillful lighting and well-patterned groups for dignity and grandeur.[99] Jo Mielziner designed the settings for "Distant Drums." Daniel Poole played Abraham Lincoln in "If Booth Had Missed." The summer session the University of Minnesota produced Rostand's "L'Aiglon."[100] "The Rose Without a Thorn" featuring Henry VIII was presented in London. The Experimental Theatre and the Greek Department of Vassar Col-

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[96] Ibid. (November, 1931), 905-906.

[97] Ibid. (December, 1931), 964, 997, 991.

[98] Theatre Arts Monthly, XVI (January, 1932), 77.

[99] Ibid. 78, 79.

[100] Ibid. (March, 1932), 183, 185, 254.

lege recently united in a production of Euripides' tragedy, "The Hippolytus."[101] "Romeo and Juliet" was given by the Oxford University Dramatic Society.[102] The Seattle Repertory Playhouse played "Romeo and Juliet." "The Merchant of Venice" appeared at the Dublin Gate Theatre, "Twelfth Night" at the Fountain Valley School of Colorado, "Richard III" at Amherst College, "Gammer Gurton's Needle at the Ohio University Playshop, "The Taming of the Shrew" at the University of Michigan Laboratory Theatre, "Caponsacchi" at the University of Oklahoma, "The Devil's Disciple" at the University of Missouri Workshop, "Berkeley Square" at Cornell University, "The School for Scandal" at Stockport, England, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" at the Seattle Repertory Playhouse.[103] "Henry IV, Part I" was played at Dartmouth College.[104]

The dramatic productions of 1933 also included costume plays. "Lucrece" had an impressive Renaissance setting designed by Robert Edmond Jones. "Alice in Wonderland" came alive at the Civic Repertory Theatre.[105] The scenery designed by Edward Garrick, son of Gordon Craig, for the pro-

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[101] Ibid. (May, 1932), 366, 423, 424.

[102] Ibid. (June, 1932), 450.

[103] Ibid. (July, 1932), 515, 522, 560, 570.

[104] Ibid. (December, 1932), 1025.

[105] Theatre Arts Monthly, XVII (February, 1933), 92, 107, 108.

duction of "Macbeth" at the Old Vic in London made extensive use of curtains. "Distant Drums," a drama about wagon trains and Indians, was given at the Denver University Civic Theatre.[106] "Richard of Bordeaux," produced in London, presented John Gielgud in the name part.[107] "The Brontês," one of several plays about the sisters, was presented at the Croydon Repertory Theatre in England. "Romeo and Juliet" appeared at the Berkshire Playhouse.[108] Two other plays depicting the life of the Bronte sisters have been shown: "Embers at Haworth" by the Gateway Players of Los Angeles and "Moor Born" at the University of Iowa. "Edgar Allan Poe" helped, at the University of Southern California, to celebrate the one hundred and twenty-third anniversary of the poet's birth. Carnegie Institute of Technology played "Henry VIII." "The Comedy of Errors" was given an oriental atmosphere at the Seattle Repertory Playhouse. Emerson College of Oratory staged "The Shoemaker's Holiday." Dartmouth College played "Henry IV" in the Elizabethan style with property changes in full view. Vassar College presented for the first time in English "The Dream of Vasavadatta," by Bhasa, a Hindu play of the Fourth Century, A. D. "Leonardo

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[106] Ibid. (March, 1933), 174, 238.

[107] Ibid. (May, 1933), 347, 348.

[108] Ibid. (June, 1933), 407, 436.

da Vinci" was played at the Goodman Theatre. Iowa State Teachers College produced "Marco Millions." The University of North Carolina showed "Davy Crockett," a folk drama of the Tennessee frontier.[109] There was a very popular performance of "Twelfth Night" at the Old Vic, London.[110]

The interest in costume plays continued in 1934. Katherine Cornell had a repertory of "Romeo and Juliet," "the Barretts of Wimpole Street," and "Candida" for a tour across the country. Helen Hays appeared as Mary in "Mary of Scotland." A new and very free rendering of "Comedy of Errors" was shown in Breslau, Germany. A modern-dress and greatly-revised version of "Twelfth Night" was offered at the Berlin Staatliches Schauspielhaus.[111] The tenth Soviet Moscow production of "Twelfth Night" was shown at the Second Art Theatre. The Greek National Theatre at Athens presented "Agamemnon." In "Hamlet" at the Meiji Theatre, Tokyo, a girl was cast as the prince.[112] The old Central City Opera House in Colorado planned "Othello" with designs by Robert Edmond Jones as part of its summer festival program.[113] The

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[109] Ibid. (July, 1933), 488-489, 490, 494, 505, 526, 536, 541.

[110] Ibid. (December, 1933), 923.

[111] Theatre Arts Monthly, XVIII (January, 1934), 8, 15, 25.

[112] Ibid. (April, 1934), 284, 303, 312.

[113] Ibid. (June, 1934), 401.

Southern Oregon Normal School produced "Andrew Jackson." Aristophanes' "The Birds" was played by the English Club at the University of California. The Ottawa Drama League presented "Romeo and Juliet." The Cornish Theatre, Seattle, played "The Cricket on the Hearth"; and the Civic Theatre of Portland, Oregon, "A Christmas Carol."[114] "Abraham Lincoln" by John Drinkwater furnished an excellent recreation of the life of the President. The Shakespeare Festival Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon added to its repertory "Love's Labour's Lost." Max Reinhardt produced "Maria Stuart" in Vienna. Walter Hampden played Cyrano in "Cyrano de Bergerac."[115] The Repertory Playhouse of Seattle presented "Volpone."[116]

Great interest in costume plays continued in 1935. Walter Hampden, who had been on tour, returned to Broadway in a repertory including "Richlieu," "Hamlet," "Macbeth," and "Richard III." Philip Merivale in the Theater Guild production of "Valley Forge" played George Washington in a "keen, vigorous, aristocratic style."[117] John Gielgud's

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[114] Ibid. (July, 1934), 490, 519, 521, 552.

[115] Ibid. (August, 1934), 588, 609, 610.

[116] Ibid. (November, 1934), 878.

[117] Theatre Arts Monthly, XIX (January, 1935), 38, 69.

production of "Hamlet" in London received the highest praise.[118] The Leningrad Theatre for Young Spectators, the first professional children's theatre in Soviet Russia, produced Makariev's version of "The Prince and the Pauper." The twenty-fourth revival of a play of Shakespeare given by the Drama Department of the Carnegie Institute of Technology was "Troilus and Cressida."[119] "The Tempest" was included in the first-season repertory of the City Theatre in Gothenburg, Sweden.[120] The Moscow State Jewish Theatre celebrated its fifteenth anniversary with a spirited production of "King Lear."[121] Lynn Fontanne and Alfred Lunt played in a "mad, slashing, obstreperous production" of "The Taming of the Shrew."[122] The Duke Players of Duke University presented "Androcles and the Lion." "Elizabeth the Queen" became the forty-seventh production of the Portland Civic Theatre, Oregon. "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at the University of Michigan used the services of the University Orchestra, Choral Union, and Physical Education Department.[123] "Victoria Re-

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[118] *Ibid.* (February, 1935), 107.

[119] *Ibid.* (March, 1935), 216, 230.

[120] *Ibid.* (May, 1935), 338.

[121] *Ibid.* (June, 1935), 435.

[122] *Ibid.* (July, 1935), 477.

[123] *Ibid.*, 491, 492, 510.

gina" was among the spring attractions in London.[124] The Broadway success of "The Old Maid" was heightened by its award of the Pulitzer Prize.[125] The Midsummer Drama Festival of the Pasadena Community Playhouse saw the performance of all the chronicle plays of Shakespeare. Kansas State College gave "Distant Drums."[126] "Two Gentlemen of Verona," freely adapted into German, was produced at the Prussian State Theatre in Berlin.[127]

In 1936 the interest was still great in costume plays. John Gielgud produced "Romeo and Juliet" in London. "Pride and Prejudice" was "a delightful excursion into nineteenth century manners." . . . . T. S. Eliot's poetic drama "Murder in the Cathedral" was originally performed in the Chapter House at Canterbury.[128] Helen Hays played the Queen in "Victoria Regina." Guthrie McClintoc directed "Parnell."[129] Katherine Cornell appeared in her own production of "Saint

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[124] Ibid. (August, 1935), 625.

[125] Ibid. (October, 1935), 741.

[126] Ibid. (November, 1935), 877, 878.

[127] Ibid. (December, 1935), 960.

[128] Theatre Arts Monthly, XX (January, 1936), 2, 11, 21.

[129] Ibid. (February, 1936), 86, 109, 117.

Joan."[130] The version of "Macbeth" prepared for the Negro Theatre was typical of the best work done by the W. P. A. Federal Theatre.[131] "Noah," one of the most popular of the newer plays, was produced at the University of Iowa Theatre and also at the University Civic Theatre of Denver. The Dartmouth Players offered a very successful "Julius Caesar." The University of Nebraska presented "Cyrano de Bergerac." A pivoted unit was used for "Henry IV, Part I" as staged at Northwestern University Theatre. The Bread Loaf School of English dramatized "The Fall of the House of Usher." "Great Expectations" was presented at the Playhouse in Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard.[132] Norman Bel Geddes used many levels and twelve entrances--not one visible from the audience--in his production of "Hamlet." Carnegie Tech chose "Antony and Cleopatra" for a modern reconstruction of the Elizabethan stage. "Twelfth Night" appeared in a modern unit setting at the University of Michigan.[133] John Gielgud produced a most successful "Hamlet" in New York. "Saint Helena" was presented in London. Leslie Howard's "Hamlet" was set in Den-

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[130] Ibid. (April, 1936), 255.

[131] Ibid. (June, 1936), 433.

[132] Ibid. (July, 1936), 498, 501, 502, 509, 530, 563.

[133] Ibid. (October, 1936), 780, 816.

mark in the eleventh century.[134] Wycherley's "The Country Wife" was produced in London and scheduled for New York.[135]

Costume plays continue in favor in 1937. A Soviet version of "Much Ado About Nothing" used variations of a permanent set for three of the many scenes.[136] "Jane Eyre" had appeared at the Malvern Festival; the Theater Guild brought it to New York.[137] Maurice Evans in "The Life and Death of Richard II" played in London and later brought the play to New York. The Old Vic in London staged "Hamlet." Lee Simonson designed the settings and costumes for "The Masque of Kings."[138] Katherine Cornell revived "Candida."[139] The Westchester Playhouse in Mt. Kisco presented "The Taming of the Shrew." "The Pursuit of Happiness" was played at Whitefield, New Hampshire. "Twelfth Night" was on the summer program for the Garrick Players at Kennebunkport, Maine. "Madame Bovary" was one of the longest run productions of the season in Paris.[140] "Barchester Towers" was first produced

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[134] Ibid. (November, 1936), 834, 839, 840.

[135] Ibid. (December, 1936), 917.

[136] Theatre Arts Monthly, XXI (January, 1937), 35.

[137] Ibid. (February, 1937), 169.

[138] Ibid. (March, 1937), 187, 188, 241.

[139] Ibid. (April, 1937), 264.

[140] Ibid. (June, 1937), 436, 438, 441, 463.

at the Yale Department of Drama. Two of the dozen-odd Shakespearean plays registered among the year's great successes are "As You Like It" played by the Carnegie Tech Department of Drama and "Macbeth" produced by the Antioch College Players. The company of the Washington State Theatre appeared in "The Comedy of Errors." The University of Michigan staged "Henry VIII"; the Colorado Springs Drama Club, "Murder in the Cathedral." The Civic University Theatre of Syracuse produced "Daughters of Atreus"; the University of Washington, Seattle, "She Stoops to Conquer"; the University of Idaho, "Noah"; Southern Oregon State Normal School, "The Merchant of Venice"; Brooklyn College, "Volpone."[141] At the Bard College Theatre there was a novel method of staging "Cymbeline."

> . . . . the auditorium and stage of the theatre were transposed, the audience was seated on the stage, and the balcony and the orchestra were used as an Elizabethan stage. The balcony became the 'inner above,' the area under the balcony 'the inner below' and the orchestra front the forestage.[142]

As this partial listing of the costume plays presented in the last six years and the great variety in the forms and kinds of plays may suggest, constant and rewarding experiments have extended the principles of modern stage presentation.

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[141] *Ibid.* (July, 1937), 517, 535, 543, 544, 563, 569, 571, 572.

[142] *Ibid.*, 502.

CHAPTER VIII

CHIEF EXPONENTS OF THE MODERN STAGE

The public has been able to witness the modern magic of the stage partly because there have come into being many organizations desirous of giving expression to the new theories. These groups have not discarded the plays written before the new era, but they have been guided by the belief that the public was interested in new devices for the stage, new theories for lighting and scenery, new philosophies, new forms for the written play as well as in some of the plays written in or about earlier times.

"The most conspicuously successful institutional theatre in the English-speaking world"[1] is the Theater Guild in New York.

It was founded in 1919 by members of the Washington Square Players in New York City with an idealistic scheme of presenting each season at least six really good plays that gave no certain promise of financial success. The directors were Philip Moeller, Lawrence Langner, Maurice Wertheim, Lee

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[1] Seldon Cheney, *The Theatre Three Thousand Years of Drama, Acting and Stagecraft* (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1935), p. 505.

Simonson, Theresa Helburn, and Westley.[2] When the first Guild meeting was held, the members had $500 in the bank. They rented the old Garrick Theatre. The first production, Benavente's "Bonds of Interest," failed, but St. John Ervine's play "John Ferguson" had enormous success.[3]

The function of the Theater Guild is that of an experimental workshop. It has both drawn largely from the field of European drama[4] and angled for the best written drama of current times among American playwrights.[5] From its inception its standard has been good production of excellent plays.[6]

It was aided in its initial difficulties through the generosity of Otto H. Kahn.[7] As soon as possible the managers built a large subscription audience. At the beginning of the season subscribers buy tickets for each of the plays

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[2] "Theatre Guild." The Columbia Encyclopedia, 1749 and "A note on the success of the Theater Guild of New York." The American Review of Reviews, LXXII (October, 1925), 437.

[3] "A note on the success of the Theater Guild of New York," ibid., 437.

[4] "The Guild Theatre and American drama." The Outlook, CXXXIX (April 29, 1925), 643.

[5] Seldon Cheney, op. cit., p. 499.

[6] "A note on the success of the Theater Guild of New York," op. cit., 437.

[7] Seldon Cheney, op. cit., p. 505.

--at first, six--that the Guild is pledged to give.[8] The number of holders of the season tickets has increased steadily: in 1925 there were more than 14,000;[9] in 1929, more than 20,000 subscribers to the annual program of five plays. The audiences in New York and on the Road include also an enormous number of non-subscribers.[10] When the Garrick Theatre became inadequate, the Guild raised by public subscription over half a million dollars[11] and in 1925 opened its new theatre on 52nd Street.[12] By that same year it also had four other New York playhouses under at least temporary control.[13] Beginning in 1927 it has presented plays in many cities outside New York.[14] Its fame has spread over the world.[15]

Although just a few names cannot begin to show the work of the Guild during nineteen years, they will indicate the scope of its plays and of the talent it enlists.

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[8] "A note on the success of the Theater Guild of New York," op. cit., 437.

[9] Ibid., 437.

[10] Seldon Cheney, op. cit., p. 505.

[11] "A note on the success of the Theater Guild of New York," op. cit., 437.

[12] "Theatre Guild," op. cit., 1749.

[13] "A note on the success of the Theater Guild of New York," op. cit., 437.

[14] "Theatre Guild," op. cit., 1749.

[15] "A note on the success of the Theater Guild of New York," op. cit., 437.

> Among its productions have been 'Liliom,' 'R. U. R.,' 'The Adding Machine,' 'Saint Joan,' 'Goat Song,' 'Processional,' 'Porgy,' 'Mourning Becomes Electra.' The Guild dramatists include Ervine, Shaw, Eugene O'Neill, Molnar, Sidney Howard, S. N. Behrmann, Franz Werfel, and Maxwell Anderson. Joseph Schildkraut, Alfred Lunt, Lynn Fontanne, Helen Hayes, Philip Merivale, Pauline Lord, Alice Brady, Ina Claire, Otto Kruger, and George M. Cohan have appeared in Guild plays. Lee Simonson has directed the designing of the scenery.[16]

Another very important factor in the development of modernism, especially in Europe and in the United States, has been the little theatre movement.

The aims of the little theatre have been variously stated but one common agreement is that it started as a co-operative project of craftsmen, artists, and artisans whose chief object was not commercial gain but a means of bringing to the public plays kept from the commercial stage and of offering an opportunity for experimentation. According to one writer its aims are

> first . . . . the 'elusive quality which makes for rounded out spiritually unified productions'; second, the experimental ideal, the trying out of the work of playwrights and stage decorators; third, the development of a sound business management.[17]

Helen Louise Cohen thinks that the little theatre is

> commonly conceived of as a repertory theatre supported by the subscription system, producing its plays on a small stage in a small hall, selecting for production the kind of play not likely to be used by the Commercial Theatre, most frequently the one-act play, and com-

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[16] "Theatre Guild," *op*. *cit*., 1749.

[17] "The rise of the little theater." *The American Review of Reviews*, LVII (January, 1918), 107.

mitted to experiment in stage decoration, lighting, and the other stage arts.[18]

The movement started in Europe. Andre Antoine, in his Theatre Libre in Paris, opened in 1887,[19] wished

> to prove that 'high-brow' plays would draw, notwithstanding the conventional theatre manager's deeply rooted conviction to the contrary. Antoine did not quite prove his case, for he was careful to see that each of his bills contained a distinct 'punch' in addition to being high-brow, but there was no question as to his success.[20]

He produced the then revolutionary plays of Ibsen, Strindberg, Brieux, Tolstoy, and various French playwrights whose fame has since been widely recognized.[21] ". . . . his dingy little theatre on the Boulevard Strasbourg became the Mecca of the most intelligent theatre-goers in Europe."[22]

In 1891 Paul Fort founded the Theatre d'Art, already mentioned in connection with design.[23]

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[18] Helen Louise Cohen, editor, One-Act Plays by Modern Authors (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1928), p. xxiv.

[19] "The rise of the little theatre," op. cit., 107.

[20] Arthur Hornblow, A History of the Theatre in America From its Beginnings to the Present Time (Philadelphia: J. P. Lippincott Company, 1919), II, p. 327.

[21] "The rise of the little theatre," op. cit., 107.

[22] Arthur Hornblow, op. cit., p. 327.

[23] Cf. ante, p. 59.

One of Antoine's actors, Alexandre Lugné-Poë, joined Fort's enterprise, and then founded his own Théâtre de l'Oeuvre on 1893 presenting the same type of play that Antoine produced, to audiences that paid their subscription in advance each season.

The most notable of all the little theatres in France, after Antoine's, was the Théâtre du Vieux Colombier, founded on 1913 by Jacques Copeau.[24] "Its actors are professionals and its director is a scholar and an artist."[25] When it came to New York in 1917, "in preparation for the original opening the company went into the country and established a little colony."[26] They worked many hours each day on repertory and on exercises for their voices, in physical culture and dance, and in dramatizing improvised scenes since they knew that every word, every line, every color was important. The results of a company trained as Mr. Copeau has trained his, cannot, of course, be attained by any group of amateurs or semi-professionals.[27]

In Germany a group of nine men, many of them journalists, formed the Freie Bühne. Otto Brahm was the president.

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[24] Kenneth Macgowan, Footlights Across America (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929), p. 29.

[25] Helen Louise Cohen, editor, op. cit., p. xxv.

[26] Ibid., p. xxv.

[27] Ibid., pp. xxv-xxvi.

Their plan was to present modern plays that otherwise might not be shown. Almost as soon as they had started rehearsals, the talent of Gerhardt Hauptman was discovered. One of his plays became the second production of the season and helped greatly to increase the subscription list. The success of the group continued. In 1894 when Brahm was called to direct the Deutsches Theater, the Freie Bühne, which had done its work, disappeared.

A few years later, a greater director than Brahm expressed his ideas in little theatres. Max Reinhardt, whom Brahm had brought from Salsburg in 1894 to appear at the Deutsches Theater, wished to find means of bringing plays to an intimate, appreciative audience. He founded Die Brille in a restaurant. Here, and later in a larger cabaret, he added plays by Strindberg to songs, skits, and dances.

The success and intimacy of the cabaret stage led him to open the Kleines Theater in 1902. Plays by Strindberg, Wilde, Wedekind, and Gorky concluded the programs after one-act plays had been presented. Soon he was able to leave the Deutsches, open a larger playhouse, the Neues, and run its repertory side by side with that of the Kleines. In 1905 he was invited to become director of the Deutsches; however, the little theatre had such a strong appeal for him that he built a small playhouse, the Kammerspeilhaus, to

replace the deserted Kleines and Neues.[28] It seated three hundred spectators

> in roomy leather arm-chairs which could be moved about on a floor of banked levels beneath rich warm walls of red mahogany. In this little theater Reinhardt demonstrated his theories of intimate production. . . . .[29]

Strindberg realized the possibilities of the little theatre. He thought that if there was a small stage and a small auditorium, a new dramatic art might arise. In 1889 he, his wife, and some students opened an experimental theatre in Copenhagen, but the only play it gave was his own "Creditors." In 1907, in Stockholm, he and Falk, a young producer, opened the Intimate Theater seating 175 to produce exclusively his own plays, but he failed "to nourish a healthy playhouse himself."[30]

A little theatre that soon grew into a great one was the Moscow Art Theatre. Constantin Sergeitch Alexeiev Stanislavsky was the son of a prosperous merchant and the grandson of a French actress. His father had built a little theatre in their house, near Moscow. Here, from 1877 to 1888 an amateur society, the Alexeiev Circle, presented many programs. In 1888 Stanislavsky and some friends formed the

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[28] Kenneth Macgowan, _op_. _cit_., pp. 30-33.

[29] _Ibid_., p. 33.

[30] _Ibid_., p. 30.

Society of Art and Literature, a combination of a number of dramatic circles into a single amateur organization. Early in the summer of 1897 Stanislavsky and Nemirovitch-Dantchenko met. Dantchenko, a novelist and playwright of distinction, was a teacher in the dramatic school of the Philharmonic Society. He suggested that the best actors of the Society of Art and Literature and his pupils should form a new organization. Stanislavsky accepted his suggestion. The Moscow Art Theater which resulted[31] was opened in 1890.

Wyspianski, the Polish painter and poet, established his own theatre at Cracow. Its ideal was to be an inspiration to and an interpreter of Polish drama.

Brussels, Budapest, and Munich also developed little theatre enterprises.

Various little theatres were opened in England. In 1891 J. T. Grein established the Independent Theater in London which hired commercial theatres for its presentations.[32] The first production, "Ghosts," startled London. The subscribers never numbered more than 175, but Grein discovered a new playwright, Bernard Shaw. In 1897 the venture was discontinued.

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[31] Ibid., pp. 37-38.

[32] "The rise of the little theater," op. cit., 107.

The need for an opportunity to produce "plays of obvious power" continued. Two years later the London Stage Society was formed. It performed in borrowed theatres every month or so and used the volunteer services of professional actors.[33]

Miss A. E. F. Horniman greatly advanced dramatic production in England and Ireland. She not only converted, in 1904, the old Mechanics Institute in Dublin into the Abbey Theater for the Irish Players and gave the free use and an annual subsidy to it,[34] but she was responsible for the opening at Manchester, in the spring of 1908, of the Gaiety House, the first repertory house in England. Because of this playhouse a school of young dramatists developed.[35] Her work also inspired many other provincial cities to dramatic enterprise.

> Basil Dean founded the Liverpool Repertory Theater and had such variegated talents as Noel Coward and Gertrude Lawrence under his care. Sir Barry Jackson and John Drinkwater learned production and playwriting in the Birmingham Repertory Theater. The Scotch started a national dramatic movement in Glasgow.[36]

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[33] Kenneth Macgowan, *op*. *cit*., pp. 33-34.

[34] *Ibid*., p. 35.

[35] Helen Louise Cohen, editor, *op*. *cit*., pp. xxii-xxiii and Cf. ante, p. 112.

[36] Kenneth Macgowan, *op*. *cit*., p. 37.

The Irish National Theatre was preceded by various enterprises. The Irish Literary Theatre, founded in 1899 by Edward Martyn, George Moore, and William Butler Yeats, employed only English actors and was not national in scope. It ended in October, 1901. The nucleus of a new Irish National Theatre started in October 1902, with companies of amateurs which W. G. Fay assembled. The actors were unable to give full time to their dramatic interests, but they came to rehearse at odd moments during the day and evening. From these amateur companies developed the Irish National Theatre which has been strictly national.[37]

In the United States there were many contributing causes to the growth of the little theatres.

Mr. Sheldon Cheney explains that the little theatre was essentially a revolt against

> a commercial domination of 'amusements' such as no other country has known, as pretty and powerful a trust as any that ever controlled steel or oil or wood and made millions while all competition was stifled.

Between 1890 and 1910 some clever business men, by buying up playhouses in different cities had gained control of the entire machinery and art of theatre production. They strangled independent production and swallowed the smaller producing unit or drove it into bankruptcy or exile. "Stars," in most cases, had to meet the terms of the theatre owners.

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[37] Helen Louise Cohen, editor, op. cit., p. xxvii.

The commercial advantages to the owners were great, but the players and the public found many disadvantages to the system. Since there was more profit in long runs, repertory disappeared. The actor could not develop in versatility, richness, or in breadth when he had to play one part for months or years. The doors of the theatre were closed to the dramatist with new ideas or vision. No more classics or experimentally new plays were presented to the public; the plays produced were those that the business men thought sweet or thrilling enough to become best sellers.

Although Mr. Cheney admits that this is an overstatement of the case, he is convinced that the little theatres rebelled against the restrictions. They wished to present plays unfamiliar to the public, and revive the classics of older times, to give the native dramatist opportunity to see his plays presented, to try out new ideas of staging. Even if the plays were first produced by amateurs on small stages, the thought recurred that the Moscow Art Theatre and the Irish Players had developed from simple beginnings.[38]

Professional efforts toward some new kind of theatre began in 1906-07. During the season, in Chicago, Victor Mapes in the New Theater produced plays containing new ideas as well as the generally accepted type. In 1907 Donald

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[38] Sheldon Cheney, _op. cit._, pp. 500-501.

Robertson began a repertory, which continued for five years,[39] of

> Molière, Ibsen, Hauptman, Maeterlinck, Browning, Björnson, Calderon, Gogol, Goldoni, Voltaire, Goethe, Hervieu, and Giacosa, with an occasional excursion into Henry Kitchell Webster, Hamlin Garland, and others of the Chicago literary elite.[40]

From 1908 for ten summers Charles Coburn took his company presenting Shakespeare, Euripides, Molière, and MacKaye through the universities. Winthrop Ames brought together fine plays and splendid company under excellent direction at the New Theater from 1909 to 1911. William Parke and the citizens of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, struggled to found an enlightened stock company in 1911; and Jessie Bonstelle and Bertram Harrison continued the attempt in the Northampton, Massachusetts, Municipal Theater from 1912 to 1917.

However, Mr. Macgowan thinks that the professionals could not weather the financial storms long enough to develop the new theatre.

Amateur acting societies which were interested only in a small social audience had neither the inspiration nor the ability to make an attack on the general stage.

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[39] Kenneth Macgowan, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

The amateur acting club of the settlement house had an entirely different kind of power. It was not socially exclusive. It attracted persons desirous of expressing new ideas in dramatic form.

By 1907 the Hull House Players of Chicago, first organized in 1899 in Jane Addams' settlement house, were producing serious plays under the direction of Laura Dainty Pelham. In 1929 they were still giving their plays, now under M. J. Cooney, at one-quarter commercial prices, and often presenting Shaw, Galsworthy, and other serious playwrights.[41]

In New York, in 1907, Irene and Alice Lewisohn started training the young people of Henry Street Settlement in festival plays and ritual dramas. They were producing the spoken drama in Clinton Hall, Clinton Street, in 1911. In 1915 they opened the Neighborhood Playhouse on Grand Street. At first the group gave plays and dance festivals a few nights in the week. Later they played steadily. Some sympathetic professionals and certain of the amateurs interested in the work formed a permanent company. Later they experimented with repertory and revivals. A workshop was maintained for technical training, and classes were given in all the accompaniments of acting. Original plays were writ-

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[41] Ibid., pp. 46-47.

ten and produced. Outstanding plays of many languages have been given excellent productions.[42] In 1935 the Neighborhood Playhouse celebrated its twentieth anniversary.[43]

Pioneering efforts that were not outgrowths of older methods but conscious attempts to found a new theatre were many.

In 1911 at Madison the Wisconsin Dramatic Society was created by Thomas H. Dickinson, then a professor at the University of Wisconsin, and sponsored at Milwaukee by Laura Sherry. It continued into 1929 as the Wisconsin Players of Madison and Milwaukee.[44]

> Besides the usual financial and technical features of the little theater activity, the Wisconsin Players went in for the cultivation of original local plays, tours, lectures, a publication, 'The Play-book,' and the reading of plays.[45]

In 1911 also, Mr. Arthur Aldis and his wife built, in a neighboring house, a summer theatre at Lake Forest. Here amateurs acted new and original plays and almost nothing else. The Lake Forest Playhouse had an invited audience. This type of free theatre was repeated, in 1915, by Charles Edison at the Thimble Theater on lower Fifth Avenue;

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[42] Ibid., pp. 47, 49-50.

[43] *Theatre Arts Monthly*, XVIII (October, 1934), 781.

[44] Kenneth Macgowan, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.

[45] Ibid., p. 51.

in 1916, by George B. McCallum in Northampton, Massachusetts; and in some of the universities.

These pioneer efforts preceded by some months the first tour of the Irish Players from the Abbey Theater, Dublin, in 1912; much interest in little theatres was aroused by the Players.[46]

The universities, also, were experimenting with the new theatre. In 1908 the Harvard Dramatic Club had been formed to produce only original plays by Harvard men.

> By 1914 Frederick Koch and Alfred Arvold were stirring up the young men and women of North Dakota to write drama about their own people. In that year at Hanover, New Hampshire, Walter Wanger . . . . was founding the Dartmouth Laboratory Theater as a sort of town theater intended to coöperate with the playwriting course in the college. The next year Thomas Wood Stevens . . . . opened the theater through which the dramatic department of the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh has showered the country with trained actors and directors.[47]

Beginning with 1912 many little theatres came into existence.

Mrs. Lyman W. Gale of Boston started the Toy Theater in a small building in the Back Bay, then, encouraged by its success, moved into a much larger theatre[48] on Dartmouth

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[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

[47] *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

Street, which has since become the Copley Theater. Widespread interest greeted the enterprise, but the financial problems involved finally caused its dissolution.

Maurice Browne began his experiment early in 1912. Five professional actors and a dozen amateurs were the members of the Little Theatre of Chicago. They rehearsed daily without financial compensation in a theatre seating ninety-one people on the fourth floor of the Fine Arts building.[49] There he presented a beautiful performance of "The Trojan Women"[50] and skillful productions of plays by Wilfred Wilson Gibson, William Butler Yeats, Granville Barker, Strindberg, Ibsen, Shaw, Dunsany, Houghton, and Hankin.[51] Mr. Macgowan thinks that his theatre was the first to give long plays and to professionalize its actors a little.[52]

The Philadelphia Little Theater, seating 330 people, was built in 1913. Many excellent plays were enacted there, but it proved too great a financial burden. Finally the playhouse became the property of the Plays and Players.

During 1914-1915 interest in little theatres caused organizations to be started in Indianapolis, Duluth, Gales-

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[49] Arthur Hornblow, op. cit., p. 327.

[50] Kenneth Macgowan, op. cit., p. 53.

[51] Arthur Hornblow, op. cit., p. 327.

[52] Kenneth Macgowan, op. cit., p. 53.

burg, New York. Under Sam Hume, who like Maurice Browne had been a pupil of Gordon Craig, the new stagecraft flourished.

The Washington Square Players and the Provincetown Players were two of the most outstanding experiments with the little theatre.

For some time a number of people in Greenwich Village had been filled with a desire for a new type of theatre. Mr. Macgowan says that legend attributes the final stimulus to Robert Edmond Jones. One day the group produced a play with only themselves as audience. Later they rented a theatre and presented one-act plays on Friday and Saturday nights, then gave plays every night, moved to another theatre, established a school, had their work halted by the war, and in 1919 became the Theater Guild.

The Provincetown Players received their impetus from a conversation between Jones, Eugene O'Neill, George Grave Cook, and Mr. and Mrs. Hutchins Hapgood at Provincetown, Massachusetts. Production started almost at once.

Before the war other ventures were launched in St. Louis; Erie, Pennsylvania; Baltimore; and Chicago. Stuart Walker began his Portmanteau Theater in New York and then carried about the country all the lights, scenery, prosce-

nium, and costumes in packing-boxes that made the stage itself.[53]

The Cleveland Play House was begun in 1916 as an amateur venture. Interest in it developed steadily; finally enough money was raised "to build the finest theater-plant in America."[54]

Since the time of these pioneers, little theatres have sprung up all over the world so rapidly that they no longer are counted.

> Moreover, within the last decade the growth within individual organizations has speeded up so markedly that instead of calling attention to what is hopeful in accomplishment, we have latterly begun to be severely critical of what is left undone, a sure mark of maturity.[55]

As well as the community organizations in cities and towns, two other important groups have appeared: the college theatre and the summer theatre.

While amateur dramatics date from centuries ago, the significant developments in the college theatre go back forty years or a little more.[56] Fifty-two years ago George Pierce Baker, a student at Harvard, heard Henry Irving say

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[53] Ibid., pp. 54-58.

[54] Ibid., pp. 98-99.

[55] Edith J. R. Isaacs, "History repeats itself." Theatre Arts Monthly, XIX (July, 1935), 486-487.

[56] Marston S. Balch, "College and community." Theatre Arts Monthly, XXI (July, 1937), 574.

that possibly some young Harvard man would some day turn to the theatre for a career; subsequent events have showed the power of that idea in his life. At Oxford for centuries undergraduates had been forbidden to act; in 1884 the prohibition was removed. Fifty years earlier the restriction had been taken away at Cambridge, but the real arousing of interest in dramatics did not come until a few years later.[57]

During the intervening years the colleges have come to realize that the reading of plays cannot reveal their full value; they must be presented on the stage. The cultivation of an appreciation of good drama with its high educational and cultural values[58] and suitable means for experimenting with the new developments in drama have been recognized as very desirable. Resources of various departments of the colleges have been utilized so that

> the college theatre has developed from a plaything to a laboratory, from a means of occasional amusement for small independent student groups to a constructive force in the social and educational scheme.[59]

It has not only brought immediate benefits to the students and the community, but has also served as a useful training

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[57] Edith J. R. Isaacs, *op. cit.*, 496.

[58] Marston S. Balch, *op. cit.*, 575.

[59] *Ibid.*, 575.

"for later teaching or for careers in the service of the professional theatre, including playwriting."[60]

The first notable college theatre was the Harvard 47 Workshop started by George Pierce Baker. He was professor of English at Harvard from 1905 to 1925.[61] Previous to his regimé, plays as literature had been read and studied in college but not acted before an audience. He believed that the plays should be acted and also that the playwright should be taught the tools of his craft. He "imparted to his students the principles by which, consciously or unconsciously, good plays were written through the ages, and then he put their plays on the stage to test them."[62]

Most of the plays produced were from English 47 or English 47a, the two courses in playwriting at Harvard.

> . . . . English 47a is open only to those who have shown unusual ability in English 47, and admission to the latter course depends on competition. From the one-act manuscripts annually submitted the first of June the director will pick not more than from twelve to fifteen persons for the course and he reserves the right to reduce this number to any extent he may think wise if the manuscripts submitted show slight promise.[63]

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[60] Ibid., 575.

[61] "George Pierce Baker." Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th edition, II, 944.

[62] Boyd Smith, "The university theatre." Theatre Arts Monthly, XVII (July, 1933), 521.

[63] George P. Baker, "The 47 Workshop." The Century Magazine, IOI (February, 1921), 418.

Every member of the course was expected to learn all he could of the methods of the Workshop, and to take whatever part was possible in the activities of production. When the Workshop was begun in 1913, the members of the organization did practically all the work, a novel situation at that time. The evident absorption of everybody in his task was an outstanding feature of the Workshop.[64]

Mr. Baker had a great ability to help his students discover their own powers.

> His hope was that his playwrights would learn by having a real production in front of a selected audience, each member of which was supposed to turn in a criticism.[65]

In 1925 when he went from Harvard to Yale as head of the newly organized Department of Drama and Director of the Yale University Theatre, Theatre Arts

> printed a 'Baker Map' to show how many of our important playwrights, designers, critics, teachers, he had had within his sphere of influence during their formative years, and how far afield their influence in turn had gone. The map was, further, intended to indicate what hopes lay in newer college theatres and workshops, which were just beginning work along the lines laid down by Mr. Baker.[66]

A record of only eight years of work at Yale shows that his "sphere of influence" has continued to widen to reach vari-

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[64] Ibid., 424, 420, 418.

[65] John Mason Brown, "The four Georges." Theatre Arts Monthly, XVII (July, 1933), 546.

[66] "Two Baker maps." Theatre Arts Monthly, XVII (July, 1933), 552.

ous parts of the country where younger men and younger colleges are building their own theatre worlds. There are, also, "other Yale Baker men working actively in almost every branch of the theatre but not associated with any definite organization . . . . .[67]

In 1935 there were "seven hundred colleges giving courses in the arts and crafts of the theatre . . . . ."[68] In many of the colleges some special problem is being studied. Iowa University has a plan for a three-part theatre unit--

> one to serve the University and the people of the state with plays, one to serve the students in the theatre courses as an experimental playhouse, and one to serve talented playwrights of the country as a laboratory . . . . .[69]

In Cleveland there is coöperation between the department of Drama and Theatre in the Graduate School of Western Reserve University and the Cleveland Play House. The Play House, one of the best equipped and most successfully administered theatres in the United States, has two stages "on which are produced each year fifteen to twenty plays widely varying in

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[67] Ibid., 552-554.

[68] Edith J. R. Isaacs, op. cit., 494.

[69] Ibid., 494.

style and period."[70] Opportunity is given to the students

> to observe every step in the professional production of a play, from the first reading to the final performance. Not only can the direction be studied but also the acting, lighting, scene design, staging and costuming.[71]

Instruction is given by members of the theatre's staff as well as by the university faculty.[72] ". . . . graduate students take some part in at least one production there each semester."[73]

Experiments in various phases of modern stage presentation are being carried on almost constantly in college theatres.

Since 1920 summer travelers have gone to theatres and drama festivals in different parts of the world, in the early years especially in Europe and more recently in this country.

In 1935 many who had formerly gone to Germany turned their steps to England and Russia. The drama festival at Malvern, England--1937 marked its ninth season--has become a center for study and performance.[74] The Shakespeare Dramat-

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[70] Barclay S. Leathem, "Adventures in cooperation." Theatre Arts Monthly, XIX (July, 1935), 498.

[71] Ibid., 498.

[72] Ibid., 498.

[73] Barclay S. Leathem, "College and community." Theatre Arts Monthly, XXI (July, 1937), 574.

[74] "The audience on the road." Theatre Arts Monthly, XIX (May, 1935), 378.

ic Festival which presents plays from about the middle of April to the middle of September[75] has been housed in the new Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford[76] since it was completed in 1932.[77] In 1935 there was an open-air theatre in Regent's Park, London, with two performances daily.[78] The fifth Soviet Theatre Festival was held in Moscow from September 1 to 10, 1937.[79]

> Moreover, what was a few years ago only the hint of a summer theatre in America has become a definite trend, an inevitable feature of the season. Each year there are more summer theatres, more festivals, ranging in length from a week to six weeks, more acting, dancing and play-producing ventures developing a permanence of endeavor and direction.[80]

Several drama festivals have developed in the United States. The Pasadena Playhouse has had a highly specialized program for each of its three years: Shakespeare's historical plays were presented in 1935, seven of his Greco-Roman

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[75] Ibid., XVII (April, 1933), 321.

[76] Ibid., XVII (April, 1933), 321.

[77] E. M. Herring, "The Stratford theatre." Theatre Arts Monthly, XVI (February, 1932), 116.

[78] "The audience on the road." Theatre Arts Monthly, XIX (May, 1935), 380.

[79] Theatre Arts Monthly, XXI (June, 1937), 415.

[80] "The audience on the road." Theatre Arts Monthly, XIX (May, 1935), 378.

plays in 1936,[81] seven plays featuring "The Story of the Great Southwest" in 1937.[82] In Central City, Colorado, festivals have been held for a number of years under the direction of Robert Edmond Jones.[83] The Mohawk Drama Festival at Union College, Schenectady, New York, was first supervised by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Coburn. Mrs. Coburn died in April 1937. The Festival completed its third season--in 1937--with Mr. Coburn in charge.[84] From one season in Ann Arbor, the middle-west drama festivals spread to four cities in 1935: Mineapolis, St. Paul, Milwaukee, and Ann Arbor.[85] In 1936 the seventh annual Festival was held at Ann Arbor and the Seattle Repertory Playhouse had its fifth Annual Summer Drama Festival.[86]

In addition to the festivals, the summer theatres include stock companies, try-out theatres, and non-professional theatres with schools or apprentice groups.

Summer stock is primarily a professional actor's theatre. Players of established reputation often play a vari-

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[81] Morton Eustis, "Summer theatre--1936 model." Theatre Arts Monthly, XX (June, 1936), 427.

[82] Theatre Arts Monthly, XXI (June, 1937), 414.

[83] Morton Eustis, op. cit., 427.

[84] Theatre Arts Monthly, XXI (June, 1937), 414.

[85] "The audience on the road." Theatre Arts Monthly, XIX (May, 1935), 387.

[86] Ibid., XX (April, 1936), 322.

ety of roles and troup through the summer, joining professional or semi-professional casts for a longer or a shorter stay.[87]

> Skowhegan . . . . always has, among its residents or guests, enough prominent actors and playwrights to make its schedule an imposing one . . . . .
>
> Among other stock companies, variously organized, are the Westchester Playhouse, at Mt. Kisco; the South Shore Players at Cohasset; Raymond Moore's Cape Playhouse at Dennis; the County Theatre, Suffern; Walter Hartwig's Ogunquit Playhouse; the Berkshire Playhouse at Stockbridge; the Maverick Players at Woodstock, New York; Phidelah Rice's Theatre at Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard; Milton Steifel's Ivoryton Playhouse; the Newport Casino Theatre, to be run for the second summer by the Actor-Managers, Inc.; the Essex Players, Lake Champlain; the Forty-Niners at Whitefield, New Hampshire; and the theatre at Falmouth . . . .
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> Most, but not all, of these theatres are organized into three units--a small permanent company of professional players (six to eight in number), a school or apprentice group (not necessarily amateurs), and guest stars. The students are used in mob scenes and sometimes play small parts in the plays. But the productions, for the most part, are strictly professional and under professional direction.[88]

There is, apparently, just one theatre which is for try-out pyrposes only, the Red Barn at Locust Valley, Long Island. Each play presented is prepared as nearly as possible for Broadway presentation in the fall.[89]

In many of the semi-professional or amateur summer theatres, "built around student groups and dramatic schools,"

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[87] Morton Eustis, op. cit., 425-426.

[88] Ibid., 426.

[89] Ibid., 428.

the repertories parallel professional schedules, often with guest stars in the leading roles.

> A few representative examples of this type of theatre, taken from the hundreds scattered through the country, are the Summer Theatre, Keene, New Hampshire; the Provincetown Theatre, Clinton Hollow; the Peterborough Players; the Hilda Spong Players at Cape May; the Little Theatre at Gloucester; and the New London Players, near Lake Sunapee, New Hampshire.[90]

Plays revealing principles of modernism are often presented in the summer theatres. Modern devices, which have been generally accepted as desirable, for utilizing the parts of the modern stage, for lighting, for scenery are frequently employed; there are also many experiments in new ways of expressing modernism on the stage.

Whether the tributary theatre, in affording opportunities for people to become "artistically articulate" has really failed to train theatre talent and so has contributed very little to the "mainstream of American theatre" as Mr. Duerr[91] thinks, or whether, according to Miss Isaacs, the thing which today looks "like a ten-year or a fifty-year revolt against the conventionality, and the emptiness, of the commercial theatre" may perhaps be a "turning back . . . . to fresh sources for a renewal of the theatre's true life," the sources being the colleges, which, in the time of

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[90] Ibid., 427.

[91] Edwin Duerr, "Tributary theatre inventory." Theatre Arts Monthly, XXI (July, 1937), 547.

Shakespeare, were the center of brilliant high comedy, of farce, of folk plays,[92] the Theatre Guild and the various branches of the tributary theatre have continued and extended the work in modern stage presentation.

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[92] Edith J. R. Isaacs, op. cit., 494-496.

CHAPTER IX

NATIONAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS MODERNISM

Many evidences of modernism on the stage have already been discussed in connection with different divisions of modern stage presentation. However, until now, special attention has not been focused on the attitudes of different countries towards this phase of drama. In some countries interest in the modern ideas started earlier than in others and development of them was more rapid. While changes have occurred in the application of the principles of modernism, its chief attributes have remained constant. The mental unrest, especially of the last few years, has brought much variation in the choice of subjects for dramas and further experimentation with the methods of presenting plays.

For the century and a half during which Poland was partitioned between Russia, Germany, and Austria the censorship allowed harmless farces and comedies of manners but no foreign dramas with ideas that might cause the people to realize their situation. When the Austrian rule was slackened, towards the beginning of the century, the Krakow theatre began to expand and follow the tendencies prevalent in important capitols. For some years Russian officials used the theatre in Warsaw for their own gain, but with the removal of restrictions at the end of the war, all over the country

the theatre began a complete reorganization; "a contagious spirit of enthusiasm, a keen public interest, and a true artistic standard have developed in the Polish theatre."[1]

Stanislas Wyspianski lead the progressive movement in Krakow which began about 1895. He practised the tendencies towards simplification and stylization now so prevalent in the world theatre. He trained the regisseurs, decorators, and actors of the Polish stage today for the presentation of the great poetic dramas including his own, which tax even the advanced and complicated stage technique of today. Experimentation has flourished,[2] especially in the last few years as "evidenced by the large number of adaptations from the novel form done with many short scenes."[3]

Norway, within the last few years, has had a renaissance of the theatre, largely because of the efforts of Hans Jacob Nilsen.[4] He has been influenced in his career especially by Stanislavsky through "My Life in Art."[5] A civil engineer by training, his interest in drama was shown during his college days when he was a capable actor. Since 1922 he

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[1] Frederick Burleigh, "The Polish theatre." Theatre Arts Monthly, XVI (January, 1932), 45.

[2] Ibid., 46.

[3] Ibid., 53.

[4] Theatre Arts Monthly, XIX (March, 1935), 189.

[5] Lancet, "Theatre in Norway." Theatre Arts Monthly, XIX (March, 1935), 189.

has been before the public appearing with different groups in several cities. To celebrate the 250th anniversary of Holberg, plays of his were staged in a new revolutionary way by Mr. Nilsen, working with the author, Oskar Braaten, and the painter of the settings, Per Krohg. They kept the spirit of Holberg but introduced every possible modern detail into the performance. Soon after, Mr. Nilsen was offered the position, held earlier by Bjorsen and Ibsen, of head of the National Theatre in Bergen, Norway. His productions have restored the keen interest of the public in the theatre; the Bergen theatre has become a leader in Scandinavia.[6]

Germany, which was a leader in the new theatrical interests at the beginning of the century, has ceased to hold this position.

The management of the German stage has greatly changed. Max Reinhardt, before the beginnings of the present regime, had showed "an inclination to retire from active work in Germany."[7] It may be that his large productions in Vienna, Salsburg, and London made it impossible for his direction of several Berlin playhouses to be effective. Political considerations may have been partly responsible for the change. The development of theatrical interest in Russia

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[6] Ibid., 187-189.

[7] Ashley Dukes, "The scene in Europe Nazi theatre: first phase." Theatre Arts Monthly, XVIII (January, 1934), 23.

diverted the interest, to some extent, from Germany. The classics, especially Shakespeare, did not furnish Reinhardt with sufficient creative material. The writers of drama who appeared "reverted to the old naturalistic or social drama that meant nothing to him."[8] Many of his best players and a large part of his trained audience gave their devotion to the moving pictures.

> His banishment or the official boycott of his stages was only a convenient symbol of the change that had come over the German attitude to art. With him went a number of Jewish producing managers of no artistic consequence, and a handful of young directors of talent. It was the removal of this directive influence in management that made the essential change in the German theatre after the new revolution.[9]

The authors who have given expression to modernism in the drama have also been frowned upon and in many cases some or all of their works have been banned from the stage. In Germany they have included Gerhart Hauptmann, Wedekind, Georg Kaiser, Bruno Frank, Ferdinand Bruckner, the Jews from Schnitzler to Werfel, Toller, and Hasenclever. Most foreigners have come under the ban: Ibsen and Strindberg, all Russians, Pirandello, Lenormand, Eugene O'Neill, and Bernard Shaw.

Of the players "Jewish and non-Aryan artists are excluded only from the officially subventioned theatres"

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[8] *Ibid.*, 23.

[9] *Ibid.*, 23.

throughout the county, which means a complete ban in the small towns. In the larger cities where there are private theatres as well as state theatres, the private theatres select their own casts. As a result many non-Aryan or half-Aryan still find parts, often with film engagements. Many, however, have left the stage for good.

The original designers and minor artists of the old theatre have turned their talents to other channels,[10] for "modernist tendencies are especially unwelcome in the graphic and plastic arts."[11]

For many generations the theatre has received state and municipal support. Now the state "has no use for artistic experiment or adventure."[12]

> By the new Reich Theatre Law of May 1934 every playhouse in Germany was placed under the control of the Minister for Popular Enlightenment (if Volksaufklärung can so be described) and Propaganda. It was made legally binding on the leaders of each syndical chamber to fulfil their cultural task in the theatre 'in awareness of national responsibility, and in accordance with artistic and moral conscience.' It was further decreed that all the enterprises originating on the stage require the approval of the Ministry of the day, and that the entire personnel of each chamber within the playhouse obey unreservedly the orders of its responsible leader.[13]

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[10] *Ibid.*, 23-24.

[11] *Ibid.*, 27.

[12] *Ibid.*, 32.

[13] Ashley Dukes, "The scene in Europe Nazi theatre: second phase." *Theatre Arts Monthly*, XIX (March, 1935), 178-179.

The result is that types of plays presented are very limited. The least introspective works of Shakespeare are the most popular. The German classics are carefully selected. Plays of Oscar Wilde and Gerhart Hauptman "in which no subversive tendency can be discerned" are chosen. Shaw is infrequently played. The present-day playwrights are usually declared Nazis.[14]

Irish drama, always conditioned by the nation's history, seems to be entering a new phase: "in Dublin there is a quickened interest in the theatre; dramatists are experimenting with new methods; plays by new writers appear."[15]

The Abbey Theatre has continued to maintain the standards established when it was started: its players--Irish actors--perform plays "in which the situations and problems are peculiar to Irish life." Valuable as these productions are,[16] they do not include foreign dramas nor are the plays experimental in form.[17]

Another important Irish theatre, the Dublin Gate Theatre, which supplements the work of the Abbey Theatre, has

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[14] Ibid., 184.

[15] Dorothy Macardle, "Experiment in Ireland." Theatre Arts Monthly, XVII (February, 1934), 124.

[16] Ibid., 132.

[17] Ibid., 127.

developed through the efforts of Hilton Edwards and Micheal MacLiammoir. It now presents plays of the modern writers of different countries as well as those of Irish playwrights. These two men delight in novelty and in the employment of every resource of their arts and crafts. They shape dramatic conceptions in a variety of methods, they explore new regions for themes. They make naturalistic plays out of barge-men, witches, and czars; they evoke thoughts and emotions without speech or action; they project the audience into the character's brain by the powerful use of symbol and suggestion.[18]

The new plays produced by the Dublin Gate Theatre depict Irish settings and characters, but their problems and conflicts, ideas, and emotions have a universal appeal.[19]

The entire history of the Russian stage covers a little more than a hundred years. In the two or three generations before the coming of the Soviets, classical drama, romantic drama, social drama, realistic drama all appeared. Then came the Russian revolutionary drama of the 1920-1929 type. Three explanations for it have been advanced: that it was mass-hysteria in dramatic form, that its constructivist settings were symbolic of the new machine age, that it was

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[18] Ibid., 127-129.

[19] Ibid., 132.

functioning as a sort of political newspaper.[20] Constructivism in Russia has already been discussed.[21] Miss Marie Seton states that the prevailing spirit of the Russian stage for the last decade has been propagandist.[22]

The single creative mind which has expressed a new vision in Russian drama is Anton Tchekov. His work "had been materially completed by 1900, but it was only gradually becoming known in England between that time and 1910, and perhaps it was scarcely known in America at all."[23]

> Very few listeners to the plays seemed to realize that the rapid self-characterization of the personages was a brilliant technical advance upon the 'act of explanation' which had been decreed as first act ever since the middle of the previous century. When a Tchekov character had been on the stage two minutes he had told the audience everything vital (though it might also be everything trivial) about himself. And the Tchekov plot, such as it was, unfolded itself with an astonishing clarity which made the old arrangement of dramatic scenes look like a dense fog.[24]

His play "The Seagull" is the "subtlest, richest kind of modern drama."[25]

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[20] Marie Seton, "The Russian scene." *Theatre Arts Monthly*, XVII (April, 1933), 267.

[21] *Cf*. *ante*, pp. 98-101.

[22] Marie Seton, *op*. *cit*., 267.

[23] Ashley Dukes, "The scene in Europe." *Theatre Arts Monthly*, XX (September, 1936), 666.

[24] *Ibid*., 666-667.

[25] *Ibid*., 668.

During the period of theatrical readjustment following the World War some people felt that Stanislavsky's Moscow Art Theatre expounded old-fashioned ideas and that its dramatists, as Tchekov, no longer could bring adequate interpretation of a changed world. Later there was the realization that the older theatres, as the Moscow Art and the Vakhtangov should not be ignored or isolated from the newer theatres. Stanislavsky and his Art Theatre will always represent the principle of naturalism. Tairov's abhorrence of the lifelike form is shared by some of the revolutionary directors.[26] And no one has found a better method than that of Tchekov for revealing the character of each individual in a play.

After the World War the purpose of drama was to portray the whole of life.[27] Because the new Russian artistic intelligensia conceives the whole of life as an outcome of the economic conditions prevailing, the old theatrical motives of personal tragedy have been superseded by motives of social conflict.[28] The struggle of socialistic man against

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[26] Marie Seton, op. cit., 267-268.

[27] O. Litovsky, "Sixteen years of the Soviet theatre." The Theatre in the USSR, VI (Bi-monthly Illustrated Periodical, 1934), 8.

[28] Marie Seton, op. cit., 268.

the powers of nature includes "the passion, emotions, enthusiasm, tendencies, and tasks of our epoch."[29]

One of the problems confronting the theatre in the early twentieth century was the necessity of employing unskilled apprentice actors to work with actors who had gained experience in the established theatre. As a result, several theatres formed

> school groups, or studios, within their own systems, to train young actors in a single method. As early as 1906-1907, the First Art Theatre drew its actors, with few exceptions, from its own school . . . .
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> . . . .
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> . . . . (Most of the important Soviet theatres of today had such a beginning.)[30]

The groups in these schools developed a single method and a common purpose.[31] During the early days of the Revolution and the Civil War that followed, as the consciousness of a new theatre movement spread throughout the country, more schools and studios sprang up with the purpose of enunciating the principles of the art of the theatre and of discovering new forms, new ideas, new techniques of acting. "They all burned with belief in themselves and in freedom . . . ." Some of the groups found it impractical to con-

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[29] O. Litovsky, op. cit., 8.

[30] Pavel Markov, "The actor and the revolution." Theatre Arts Monthly, XX (September, 1936), 683-684.

[31] Ibid., 684.

tinue because of many problems; some survived and increased in size and importance.[32]

Since the actors realized that the renewed life outside of the school was inseparably bound with the life of the theatre, there was a change in the standards of the entire acting level. The principle of Stanislavsky--"'not the theatre for the actor but the actor for the theatre'"--took on a new meaning. It was felt that the actor should embody the theme of the play and the ideas of the characters; in some cases this would reveal the definite artistic aim and the world viewpoint of the social views of the theatre.[33] Nemirovich-Dantchenko is one of the directors who has substituted for the definitely personal attitude of the actor, the personal, group, and social attitude.[34]

Mention of a few of the Soviet theatres will indicate the ideals of theatres in the country. Both the Kamerny Theatre and the Moscow State Jewish Theatre have developed carefully stylized techniques in acting, direction, and design.[35] "Theatres made up solely of young people may be

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[32] Ibid., 683-684.

[33] Ibid., 685-686.

[34] Ibid., 693.

[35] Jay Leda, "News from Moscow." Theatre Arts Monthly, XVIII (April, 1934), 282, 285.

found all over Moscow."[36] One which enthusiastically abandons theatre tradition is the Krasnoi-Presney Theatre. Most of its personnel has come from Meyerhold: its actors, its director, its second director, and its designer. Its first three productions introduced three new theatre forms.[37]

> The action of 'Razbek' encloses part of the audience. 'Mother' is surrounded on all sides by the audience which, in its turn, is surrounded by more playing space. The third offering, a dramatization of Serafimovich's novel, 'The Iron Stream,' is played on a stage constructed the length of the auditorium, to which is added in different acts more playing-space in each of the aisles. All this sprawling ground is lit by a reflector which covers the entire auditorium, playing and audience space together, and at certain strategic points by small intense spotlights. . . . .[38]

In discussing the position of the designer in the Soviet theatre since the close of the World War, Nikolai Akimov states that his aim as an artist is the effect on the audience, directly through the actors, and indirectly, through the scenery. He hopes to develop the expressiveness of things so that they can be as effective as actors.[39]

The knowledge evidenced by the constructivists he thinks should not become an end in itself, but should be ap-

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[36] *Ibid.*, 286.

[37] *Ibid.*, 289.

[38] *Ibid.*, 289.

[39] Nikolai Akimov, "The designer in the theatre." *Theatre Arts Monthly*, XX (September, 1936), 700-701.

plied to pictorial art.[40]

His constant search for something new has caused him to unify his perceptions of actuality more strictly. Expressive realism is his goal: he desires to master a method whereby he will be able to express everything and anything on the stage.[41]

In England at the present time the attitude of certain writers of drama towards conditions around them is entirely different from that of some of the writers at the beginning of the century and a little later. At first they were in revolt against something, "hard-headed intellectualism and hard-outlined naturalism." Later expressionism appeared. Now the desire to revolt has vanished and a drama very unlike that of the past twenty years is occasionally presented.[42]

One example is "Frolic Wind" adapted by Richard Pryce from a novel by Richard Oke. Mr. Dukes says that three weeks after he saw the play he was still wondering what it had been about: whether the old ladies, sisters and hostesses of an English country house furnished the central theme, or their guests, or the "stream of life, babbling, gushing,

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[40] Ibid., 711.

[41] Ibid., 715-716.

[42] Ashley Dukes, "The English scene." Theatre Arts Monthly, XIX (June, 1935), 411.

foaming, gliding from the past through the present to some vast, uncertain and annihilating future."[43]

There are, however, many plays similar in type to those which developed at or near the beginning of modernism. One of these, "Cornelius," by J. B. Priestly, presents the efforts of a man in business to adjust himself to changing economic conditions. It is similar in type to the plays used by Miss Horniman at her Repertory Theatre in Manchester in 1912 or earlier.[44] "Within the Gates" by Sean O'Casey with its refusal to see common sense and order in the modern chaos portrays social indignation similar to that which forty years ago produced plays like Hauptmann's "The Weavers" and Gorky's "Lower Depths."[45]

The value of the creative director is unquestioned, but since he is expensive, not many theatres can afford him.[46]

In the United States the trend "'from unconscious social cooperation to conscious social cooperation'", said by Benjamin Kidd to be "the greatest contribution of our age to human society," has been forcefully shown in the theatre,

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[43] Ibid., 412.

[44] Ibid., 414.

[45] Ashley Dukes, "The English scene." Theatre Arts Monthly, XVIII (April, 1934), 258.

[46] Ibid., 257.

especially during the last twenty years.[47] Although 1934 witnessed no monumental productions, nor outstanding new talent in playwriting, in acting, or in production, and did not bring new names to stage design,

> yet it would be a dull man who did not see all around him the evidence of fortunate change in the American theatre.[48]
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> . . . .
>
> Perhaps it is the impact of all the new young people whose names and whose faces are everywhere, and to most of whom the theatre really does mean something more than speculation in real estate. Perhaps it is the strong social pressure against the limits of conventional play material and play form that comes from the experimental and the propagandist theatres, and that promises to leave no field untouched where life is vivid, where conflict stirs, where progress marches. Perhaps it is the rumor of fresh talent seen in the summer theatres. Or of poets quietly at work on theatre material, and dancers and composers. Perhaps it is only the result of the united skill of New York's inimitable press-agents back from a happy summer holiday and bursting with news for 1935.
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> Whatever it is, the outlook is good.[49]

The work in drama in the universities also has undergone vast change.[50]

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[47] Edith J. R. Isaacs, "Communal theatre." Theatre Arts Monthly, XX (July, 1936), 495.

[48] Edith J. R. Isaacs, "On the up-and-up." Theatre Arts Monthly, XVIII (October, 1934), 736.

[49] Ibid., 740.

[50] A. M. Drummond, "Drama in colleges." Theatre Arts Monthly, XVIII (July, 1934), 509.

To cite only one example,at Cornell there has been such expansion in the dramatic program that Mr. Drummond visions a plan for skilled teacher-directors to supervise students who wish to work in chorus, orchestra, band, speaking, choir, folk or athletic dance, and the like; for an extra-curricular University Theatre open to students of all colleges; for competitions in playwriting with provisions for presentation of successful plays[51]-- the principle of the Harvard 47 Workshop ; for a drama major provided by certain courses with related work in the theatre; for graduate work in dramatic technique with a Studio Theatre to furnish a field for experiment; for endowed working fellowships to provide two years for apprenticeship in the practical work of the theatre.

Twenty-five years ago such a plan would have been considered pure fantasy; today the dream has been substantially realized in some colleges.[52]

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[51] _Ibid_., 516.

[52] _Ibid_., 516-517.

CHAPTER X

SUMMARY

A discussion of modern stage presentation must begin with a definition of modern. Although authorities on the subject are not in complete agreement as to the time for the inception of a modern era, since the principles of modernism began to be rather widely practised about the latter part of the preceding century and the beginning of this, the late 1890's and the early 1900's have been selected to mark the beginning of the modern stage.

Outstanding factors of modernism include setting and lighting with a director to harmonize the entire performance; harmony between the audience and the production; and reflection of the life of the period in philosophies, plays, and organizations which produce dramas.

The modern stage owes much to its ancestry. Drama originated with the Greeks. Then the Roman theatre, the mediaeval drama, the English innyard, the Elizabethan theatre, the Restoration playhouse each made its contribution to the development of the stage until in the nineteenth century various other changes occurred.

Of the present-day theatres, the indoor theatres have retained some devices from theatres of earlier times and have made many modifications and permanent changes, as the relief

stage, the German Shakespearean stage, and the establishment of intimacy between audience and actor. The outdoor theatres, which have also retained some features from the past, include architectural theatres--classic in type and mediaeval religious theatres, nature theatres, and garden theatres.

A few ancient methods have been revived or have survived: the use of masks, the periaktoi, the trilogy; the giving of plays in the open air; the employment of the platform stage; the creating of a sense of intimacy between audience and playgoer.

Lighting has played and plays an extremely important part on the modern stage. Because of the recently-realized quality of light, diffused light, used for illumination, has given way almost entirely to living or concentrated light which intensifies the emotions.

Leaders in the reform in lighting have been Adolphe Appia, Gordon Craig, and David Belasco.

The developments in lighting have included the displacement of yellow light by white, having light come from some definite place, the realization that light from some sources is more important than that from others, the many changes in the use of colored light, the elimination in many cases of the footlights, and the greatly extended use of the spotlight.

Scenery, another great asset for effective stage productions, has employed simple and more elaborate methods for its presentations. The simple scenery has always been used in outdoor theatres. Ornate and colorful scenery was in vogue during and following the Restoration. The new idea--that scenery can evoke the mood of the play--was first presented by the German Meningen company. Exponents of the theory included Antoine, Paul Fort, the Moscow Art Theatre, the Russian ballets. Many producers and designers have continued and extended the belief: in Europe: two Russian leaders, Adolphe Appia, producers in Germany, and Gordon Craig; in the United States where the new trend started about 1912 Robert Edmond Jones, Norman Bel Geddes, Lee Simonson, Joseph Urban, Jo Mielziner, and Donald Oenslager. Various devices have been used for increasing the value of scenery and for bringing it without delay before the audience: screens, permanent settings, a skeleton setting, the revolving stage, the wagon stage, the sliding stage, the sinking stage, and the swinging stage.

The trend of the times has been shown in the philosophies of the drama.

Expressionism, which finds means to express through the scenery some emotion, had many early presentations: in Moscow; in America, in Philadelphia; in some of the Russian ballets; in Stockholm, Sweden; in Berlin. Among its outstanding features are deviation from normal conditions; sub-

stituting for individual psychology, type psychology; probings into the hidden springs of character as exemplified in the following plays: "From Morn to Midnight," "The Dream Play," "The Adding Machine," "The Hairy Ape," "The Emperor Jones," "Richard III," "Macbeth."

Constructivism, which requires actual constructions of varying kinds, has been developed chiefly in Russia. The experiments made soon after 1917 have gradually been superseded by realistic scenery until now constructivism is almost nonexistent in Russia.

Machine drama, requiring an actual machine on the stage, has been used in some plays, but it has its limitations.

Monodrama, in which the characteristics of one person become the actors, has only one vigorous promoter, Yevreinov.

Plays in recent years have shown a great variety of form and content. The mechanical divisions are many, ranging from one-act plays to a trilogy in fourteen scenes. Freak plays, radio plays, and costume plays have also drawn attention to themselves.

The many achievements of the modern stage have been revealed through a variety of organizations: the Theatre Guild of New York, the little theatre movement in Europe and in the United States, and the summer theatre.

In many countries the principles of modernism on the stage have been developed and extended: Poland, Norway, Germany, Ireland, Russia, England, and the United States.

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